

150

**Moral militants** **Jewish gold** **Imitating Emma**  
 The new middle- The Nazis stole it – From students to stars  
 class dissenters where is it now? via Edinburgh?

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Section Two, Cover Story

Section Two, Campus

# THE INDEPENDENT

3,053

THURSDAY 1 AUGUST 1996

WEATHER Mainly dry and bright with sunny spells

40P (BR 45P)

## Listen to me

I wonder if you are all living in another world in Westminster, a safe cocoon where the real world no longer touches you.

So, today I'm going to ask you to try and imagine what you would feel if a gunman burst into the House of Commons and shot dead the Prime Minister and 16 MPs. Maybe your reply would be that nothing like that can ever happen to you. I thought that too. I thought these things happened somewhere else, to someone else.

But if what happened in Dunblane Primary School had happened in the House of Commons, would you all still be dragging your heels and trying to appease the gun lobby? I very much doubt it.

On 13 March I lost my daughter Joanna. She was nearly six years old. Alison, the baby sister she had known for only four-and-a-half months, in a few years time will have to start school. On that day, when Alison takes her seat in the Primary One classroom, I want all of you to come up

An open letter from a Dunblane mother to six Tory MPs who ruled out a handgun ban as 'impractical'

bere to Dunblane and explain to her the decision you have just taken.

Will you be able to guarantee her safety? Will you be able to tell her that another Dunblane could never happen again? Because if there is no ban on guns, you will be able to offer Alison nothing.

I've listened to some of your attempts to justify this decision: "It's not the guns that are to blame, it's people." But I sat through the days of the Cullen inquiry and what came out was that there is no way you can decide on the suitability of someone to own guns. You can never foresee every circumstance they will find themselves in.

However, one clear fact is there to see – if guns were not legally available, such crimes could not be committed.

Alison will never know Joanna.

You say people who shoot for sport would be disadvantaged if guns were banned. But do you value life less than sport? It worries me that you are accepting influence from the wrong places.

The police, who uphold and enforce the law, agree that guns should be banned. Yet, all of you seem to be ignoring this advice and instead accept the views of some fellow MPs and the influence of the gun lobby.

Why? Surely there comes a point when we all have to admit our society is no longer safe, and that to make it safer we should take guns away. Listen to me. I and the other Dunblane families are not the first people on earth to lose their children through violent death. But our children were murdered. And all of you appear to be turning a deaf ear to everything that we are saying.

Pamela Ross

## MPs defend 'balanced view' on gun controls

JOHN RENTOUL  
Political Correspondent

Some Tory MPs on the Home Affairs Committee and gun club members reacted yesterday to the furrow which greeted news of their decision not to recommend a ban on handguns, but others were unavailable for comment.

John Greenway, MP for Ryedale, spoke to BBC radio's 'Today' programme on his car phone on his way out of the country. "We have concluded that a ban on handguns would be impractical," he said.

"We took the view that it is not legally held firearms that cause the problem in this country. It is the way that firearms certificates are issued where the law needs to be strengthened.

"While we entirely understand why people might want to ban handguns in the light of Dunblane, you have got to sit down and look dispassionately at what that would mean, what the effect would be and would it, in all honesty, prevent that kind of incident happening

again in the future. "We came to the balanced view that it would not."

Sir Ivan Lawrence, the committee chairman, was in Hong Kong, and issued a short statement through his Commons office saying: "Nobody has seen the report yet, since it has not been published. There is therefore nothing to be said until publication on 13 August."

Warren Hawksley, MP for Halesowen and Stourbridge, told Talk Radio: "I personally do not believe there is evidence yet to satisfy me to get rid of handguns entirely."

Mr Hawksley, whose hobby is shooting, said security should be aimed at keeping guns out of the wrong hands rather than banning them entirely.

"You can't legislate for a madman if someone is determined they want to go about using a gun," he said.

"Nearly all guns used in crime are illegal anyway."

There was no answer on any of Dame Jill Knight's numbers: her London flat, her home in her Birmingham Edg-

baston constituency, her Commons office and her secretary's home number.

Walter Sweeney, defending a majority of 19 – the smallest of the six – in his Vale of Glamorgan seat, was on holiday and "uncontactable" according to his constituency office.

David Ashby, recently deselected as the Tory candidate for Leicestershire North-West constituency for the next election after an unsuccessful libel action, did not return messages.

Most numbers for the MPs' constituency association offices were engaged, after being published in the Sun.

The National Pistol Association said the select committee had come to "a sensible decision", said McCrone, its general secretary, said: "We're very happy with what is a sensible decision. The sport is participated in by a million people from a whole range of different backgrounds. They are normal members of society. There are gun managers and road-sweepers and people who work

for local authorities – it's a real cross-section of society."

He denied that a ban on handguns could have prevented the Dunblane massacre.

"We understand there have been two massacres during the last 10 years and we have deepest sympathies for those involved but a ban on guns would not have prevented them happening," Mr McCrone said.

"It could have happened using any type of weapon."

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation welcomed the select committee's suggestions.

Dr Colin Sheldren, its Scotland region director, said: "The committee took evidence from a wide variety of sources, including very senior police officers.

"They stated it would be impractical to introduce a ban on handgun."

But the association would welcome the recommendation for closer checks on people applying for firearms licences.

Guns row, page 22  
Bryan Appleyard, page 17



Stuff of life: Scientists handle frozen embryos in the laboratory. Each stick like this carries one, three-celled embryo  
Photograph: Tom Pilston

Today:  
the end  
for 3,000  
frozen  
embryos

GLENDA COOPER

Thousands of embryos are to be destroyed today after a last-ditch appeal to the Prime Minister failed to gain a six-month reprieve. This morning clinics will begin thawing the 3,000 embryos. Fertility experts called it an "appalling waste" and at a London press conference couples desperate for a child pleaded to be able to "adopt" the embryos.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) said that legally embryos must be destroyed after five years unless both parents consented to further storage. A spokeswoman said it would be "legally and ethically wrong" for couples to adopt an embryo without parents' permission.

As the deadline approached, scores of clinics were handling calls from couples who had been untraceable or had not replied to letters. At Bourn Hall, where the first test-tube baby, Louise Brown, was created, the medical director, Peter Brinsden, said 800 embryos would still have to be destroyed. "None of us wants to destroy a single embryo. It's the first time we've destroyed an embryo without the express permission of the couple," said Mr Brinsden, who once threatened to go to prison rather than destroy the embryos.

Peter Bromwich, medical director of Midland Fertility Services, where 90 embryos will be destroyed, said: "It has been very badly planned by the civil service. We have been telling them for years that this would happen. I... would not want the embryos destroyed but we have to abide by the law."

The Life Campaigns pro-life group delivered a letter to Downing Street and the Department of Health demanding a six-month moratorium on destroying the embryos. Spokesman John Scarsbrick said 130 couples from around the world had come forward to "adopt" embryos. Three couples appeared at a London press conference, including Norman and Catherine Walker from Hitchin, Herts. Mr Walker, 39, who called the HFEA's actions "disgusting", said they had tried for four years for a child and his wife had had a miscarriage. "We would love a child but we are also trying to save a life."

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Beautiful or repulsive, foul or fair? – find out on page 3



He wrote Olympic history  
with two golds. Each one  
a thriller in 10 chapters.

**DALIE Y**  
THOMAS YOUNG

OLYMPIC LEGENDS BY SWATCH.

SWATCH



Swatch

QUICKLY  
**Moynihan for Lords**  
Colin Moynihan could return to Parliament as a peer, after a High Court ruling that his half-brother, the late Third Baron Moynihan of Leeds, forged divorce documents relating to his fourth marriage. Page 3

**Botham stumped**  
Ian Botham said he was "astonished" to have lost his libel case against Imran Khan, estimated to have cost more than £500,000. Page 5





Civil rights: The increasing importance of single-issue politics

# The respectable revolutionaries



Tea break: From left, Lotta Kronlid, Andrea Needham, Angie Zelter and Joanna Wilson yesterday. Photograph: Craig Easton

ANDREW BROWN AND DAVID COHEN

There is a new dissent abroad. It is feminist and loosely Christian, and its members are taking up causes which seemed to have disappeared after the Eighties.

The acquittal of four women, Andrea Needham, Lotta Kronlid, Joanna Wilson and Angie Zelter, on charges of causing and conspiring to cause criminal damage after beating a British military jet withhammers shows that a Liverpool jury was sympathetic to their arguments.

They had insisted that morality ought to override expedience where the arms trade was concerned, and that a war condemned by the United Nations ought not to be prosecuted with British material.

The four Christian peace activists yesterday announced they will try to bring a private prosecution against British Aerospace for aiding and abetting murder in East Timor. It was an example of the great moral confidence of the loose network of peace campaigners

and feminists to which they belong.

Ms Zelter said yesterday: "What the judgement shows is that ordinary people do know the difference between right and wrong. The judge was squirming in his seat when we were talking about the Geneva Convention and the principles laid down at the Nuremberg trials.

The implications of the judgment are incredible. They

later imprisoned for their beliefs. The Berrigan brothers are regarded as dangerous radicals.

But the doctrine that condemns the sale of military hardware for use in unjust wars is orthodox Christianity.

Fr Herbert McCahe, a Dominican philosopher and theologian says: "It is almost impossible nowadays to justify killing people." The catechism of the Catholic Church puts it

very heavily in evaluating this condition, "the catechism adds.

This demand – that the weapons used be proportionate to the evils they are meant to quell – has been read by some Catholic theologians to mean all nuclear weapons ought to be banned. It can also be interpreted to rule out the use of ground attack aircraft, such as the British Aerospace Hawk that was beaten with hammers.

The fuse that drives these arguments into action is feminism. The Christian pacifist movement is as much in favour of women priests as of peace. But in the present climate of the opinion in the Vatican, world peace may be easier to achieve.

Some of the most respectable, middle-class stalwarts of the Anglican Movement for the Ordination of Women used to spend time at Greenham Common. Lala Winckley, a member of Catholics for Women's Ordination, makes the connection clear. "We believe in biblical justice, but not biblical patriarchy," she said.

Such groups are not in favour of abortion, but they regard it as a less urgent field for activism than peace, or justice in international trade. Ms Zelter was converted to left-wing politics by her experience in Africa, where her husband was working on an aid project.

"I learnt that most of the problems Africa was experiencing originated in the way we lived our lives in the West. It was quite a shock and I took it to heart. Ever since then, I've tried to live in a way that is not going to exploit other people, and to take responsibility for what British companies are doing," she said.

Ian Linden, of the Catholic Institute of International Relations, is wry about the women's sudden fame. They have achieved more for the cause in 10 minutes with their hammers than his group had managed with 15 years' campaigning, he says. But the link between Christian feminism and peace is clear to him.

"Both in US and in this country the spearhead of radical thinking has been women, largely because the whole area of gender is such a dog's dinner and so hypocritical."

"There is a kind of democratic moment in which, without harristers, without counsel, the women speak directly to the good people of Liverpool, through the jurors, and the people of Liverpool say: 'Yes, sisters, we agree.'

**'They said that we were the law breakers but we said, no, you are'**

said we were the law breakers by disarming these planes. What we've said is, 'No, you're the law breakers: breaking a UN Resolution as well as the Nuremberg principles. If you are aware that international laws are going to be broken, then you aid and abet that, and you're a war criminal.'

The tactics of attacking military hardware stem from the Ploughshares movement of the Sixties founded to oppose the Vietnam war by the Berrigan brothers, two American Jesuits

"The power of modern means of destruction weighs

## Militant middle class find new cause ... sheep

CHARLES ARTHUR  
Science Editor

What difference 18 months makes. In February last year, the seaside towns of Brightlingsea in Essex and Shoreham in Sussex were in uproar over the export of veal calves to the Continent. Up to 1,000 protesters would turn up every day; one, Jill Phipps, died under the wheels of a lorry. Policing costs hit £6 million for the months of protest.

Commentators hailed the rise of "single-issue politics": in the future, they suggested, people with no political leaning in common would come together on specific causes.

The police in those towns are now back to their normal business. First, the veal exports moved – to Dover, following a High Court ruling. In March, they ended after the EC's ban on beef exports from the UK over fears of mad cow disease.

Now Dover typically sees a mere 50 people a day, protesting about the export of live lambs and sheep. "There's nev-



Mute protest: An animal supporter at Brightlingsea

er been the size of demonstration in Dover that there were in Shoreham or Brightlingsea," said Peter Stevenson, political and legal director of the pressure group Compassion in World Farming. "It's ... a two-hour train ride from London, longer from elsewhere. And I think people in those two towns were horrified when they first saw the trucks start coming by."

On Friday, Compassion in World Farming plans a "mass demonstration" at Dover docks. There's no knowing how many people will turn up – or whether the media that the story can't continue for a new cause.

"I think the concern about exports is as high as it's ever been. But it's in the nature of the media that the story can't continue for a new cause."

"These aren't either/or issues," said Mr Stevenson. "We don't live in a world where we can only stop one suffering and not another."

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من الراحل

## news

# Imran bowled over as Botham and Lamb lose the High Court test

JOJO MOYES

Imran Khan won the most expensive libel case in cricketing history yesterday when he successfully defended himself against accusations that he had labelled former England captain Ian Botham a ball-tamperer and a racist.

Botham said, after the trial at the High Court, that he was "astonished" at the verdict of the case, the costs of which are estimated to be up to £500,000. He and fellow cricketer Allan Lamb had sued Imran, the teetotal, Oxford-educated former Pakistan captain, over an "offensive personal attack" in *India Today* magazine, which, they claimed, suggested that they were racist, not properly educated and of inferior social standing.

Botham, alone, sued over a report in the *Sun* which, he alleged, accused him of ball-tampering – something he says he has never done.

Imran, who denied libel, said his words were taken out of context and he was only trying to defend himself against allegations of cheating made against him in a previous news-report.

As the jury returned two majority verdicts in his favour, after five hours of deliberation, Botham appeared stunned. His pregnant wife Jemima, who had accompanied him throughout the two-and-a-half-week trial, appeared to be surprised as he was, and as she left the court said the result was "amazing".

Cricket's most expensive libel case has ended – with a surprise verdict for both parties

ing", telling her mother: "I'm such a cynic". Outside the court, Imran said he was "overjoyed" by the result and paid tribute to the support of his wife.

"I thank the Almighty, that whatever I've been saying for the past two years, that I've been vindicated, that I never called anyone a racist, under-class or cheat," he said.

Imran believed that the result vindicated Pakistani cricketers who he said had been called cheats, and he added that he hoped the issue of ball-tampering would be laid to rest once and for all.

He also said he was sad that the case had come to court and that he felt "sad" for Botham. Imran, his wife, and their family were said to be celebrating last night.

Imran's solicitor, Howard Cohen, said he was "absolutely delighted" and that Imran would pay only a "very small proportion" of costs which, he said, for Botham and Lamb, were estimated at more than £300,000 for last week alone.

In a brief press conference outside his solicitor's offices



Victorious: Imran Khan and his wife Jemima outside the High Court yesterday

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

## How cricket was caught out tampering with the evidence

Derek Pringle delivers his verdict on a case for the tea-room

What struck me was how small the place was. Court 13 may have been full of giants like Ian Botham and Imran Khan, and their respective counsel Charles Gray and George Carman, but from the witness box they seemed very small.

Having been subpoenaed by Imran's solicitors, I began by facing the gentle medium-pace of Mr Carman. No rough ride here, though the jury looked as if they'd reached saturation point over cricket balls and the thousand and one ways to tamper with them.

Mr Carman was clearly never a

cricketer. Although I'd gone to court prepared to be bamboozled by ancient legal phrases such as *Qui oam dicit nihil excludit* (He who says everything excludes nothing), his use of terms like "baton down the ball" had everyone flummoxed.

As he rested, Mr Gray came on to bowl a hostile spell from the Botham-Lamb end.

Where it not for the potentially huge costs involved, and the muckiness of its central tenet – what is and isn't considered cheating – the

fought for his dignity and honesty and said he did not feel the verdict had affected his reputation.

Imran Khan had to withdraw justification and therefore had to admit I was not a cheat which is why I'm finding it con-

fusing. I'm sure other people will find it confusing as well," he added.

On the issue of the costs, Botham said he had not had time to think about the implications, but he added: "Life goes on. I'll just have to do a

couple more road shows to pay for it."

Allan Lamb, who also pro-

fessed himself "astonished"

said: "The jury's got to make

their decision and we've got to

accept it." Asked his opinion of

Imran, he said: "Still the same."

Male hormone patch is 'no elixir'

LIZ HUNT  
Health Editor

The hopes of millions of middle-aged British men – and women – were dashed yesterday, as doctors dismissed the idea of a male menopause, and said that testosterone patches were no solution to a mid-life crisis.

GPs fear a deluge of patients demanding the new patches launched today which alleviate the problems of declining testosterone levels, including loss of libido, impotence, fatigue, loss of muscle power, and depression.

The male menopause has been touted as the cause of these symptoms. Many men hoped that testosterone hormone replacement therapy would have the same rejuvenating effect on them as oestrogen patches do on women. But at a conference on the Andropatch yesterday, Dr Ian Banks, a part-time GP, said there was no evidence in men of an equivalent of the female menopause. Healthy males do not have a dramatic drop in testosterone levels in middle-age.

"What we do know about middle age is that it is a time of uncertainty and failing confidence, with an inability to fit the media image of a sexually powerful, competitive, macho male, compounded by the fear of ageing," Dr Banks, a middle-aged man, said. "It is tempting to simply put all this down to a lack of sex hormone." The belief that the patches were "an elixir of life" did a grave disservice to the public – and the health service, he said. The patches will cost the NHS around £45 a month per patient, and tests prior to prescription will cost at least £30.

The Andropatch will benefit between 20,000-30,000 men who suffer from hypogonadism (testosterone deficiency). Dr Richard Foulds, medical director of the manufacturer, SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals, said they wanted to encourage a responsible attitude towards prescribing the patches. However, executives know they have struck a goldmine. The idea of the male menopause has become fixed in the minds of many men who see no reason why they should not receive a testosterone boost.

Leading article, page 15



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## 6 arts news

# Lottery cash to sweep museums into 21st century

Ministers want greater use of technology to enhance access

Up to £500m of National Lottery money is to be thrown into technology to enhance the accessibility of museums, the Government announced yesterday in its first full review of museum policy since the Thirties.

The money will be made available over the next four years to develop museums and galleries. Following changes in lottery rules, it could be used to put museums on the Internet. Virginia Bottomley, the Secretary of State for National Heritage, said:

The National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery and the Natural History Museum, all based physically in London, are also accessible through Internet sites or CD-Roms, and Mrs Bottomley wants to see more use of information technology. The review aims at raising standards in museums and galleries, improving the stewardship of collections and access to them, enhancing museums' educational role and helping them to harness new technology.

"New technology will give greater opportunities to museums and galleries than ever before to look after their collections and make them available to a much wider audience," Mrs Bottomley said.

The review also recommends that direct funding of national museums by the Department of National Heritage should continue and that local authorities be encouraged to turn their museums into charitable trusts.

In a related development, Downing Street yesterday announced the appointment of Loyd Grossman, the food critic, to the Museums and Galleries Commission.

The presenter of the BBC's television *MasterChef* series chairs his own Campaign for Museums, which he says exists to "remind opinion formers that museums are a good thing".

Mr Grossman added yesterday:

"I hope to bring the passion and enthusiasm of a lifetime of museum-going to my role as a member of the commission."

"This legislation will enable museums to take advantage of

## Fringe benefits Section Two

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All frills: A dancer at the Royal Opera House, during rehearsals for *Cinderella*. Plans to stage *The Nutcracker* were changed because both the Kirov and ENO companies were due to perform the same ballet this autumn

Photograph: Laurie Lewis

## Bodices and breeches top the TV schedules

Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is to form the centrepiece of BBC1's autumn schedule, it was revealed yesterday, as the television trend for adapting 19th century literary classics continued unabated.

The three-part adaptation is to star Tara Fitzgerald, Rupert Graves and Toby Stephens, son of the actress Maggie Smith.

A surprising choice in many ways, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is one of the Brontë sisters' least accessible novels. It is the story of Helen, a beautiful young mother forced to flee her debauched and unfaithful husband, Arthur Huntingdon, to live with her brother, Lawrence.

Charlotte Brontë suggested that the unpleasant husband was based on their dissolute brother Branwell, and after it was published readers considered the novel excessively morbid – a far cry from *Pride and Prejudice*, the recent Jane Austen adaptation.

BBC1's £162m schedule faces tough competition from ITV, which earlier this month attacked the BBC on its own ground by announcing it would screen an adaptation of Austen's *Emma* this autumn by Andrew Davies, who wrote the acclaimed *Pride and Prejudice* for the BBC.

ITV has lined up two other audience-grabbing costume dramas: the continuation of the popular *Poldark* series – without the original stars – and an adaptation of Defoe's rollicking *Moll Flanders*.

It has also confirmed rumours that a fourth episode of *Coronation Street* would go out at 7.30pm on Sundays from the end of November in a bid to bump up Sunday night ratings.

BBC1 meanwhile will offer a

revamped version of *Clive Anderson Talks Back*, the chat show formerly on Channel 4, called *All Talk*, and former *EastEnders* star Letitia Dean in a comedy drama set in the 1950s, *The Hello Girls*, about a group of telephone operators.

In another major drama, BBC1 will be telling the story of the Victorian adventurer Cecil Rhodes, starring the ex-*Professional* actor, Martin Shaw, in an eight-part series which took 10 years to make and



Tara Fitzgerald: 'Wildfell Hall'

used 10,000 South African extras.

Returning series include *Hettie Wainthrop Investigates*, *Casualty*, *Crocodile Shoes* and *Pie in the Sky*. There will be a one-off *Absolutely Fabulous* special and a reworking of an old favourite in *The Legacy of Reginald Perrin*.

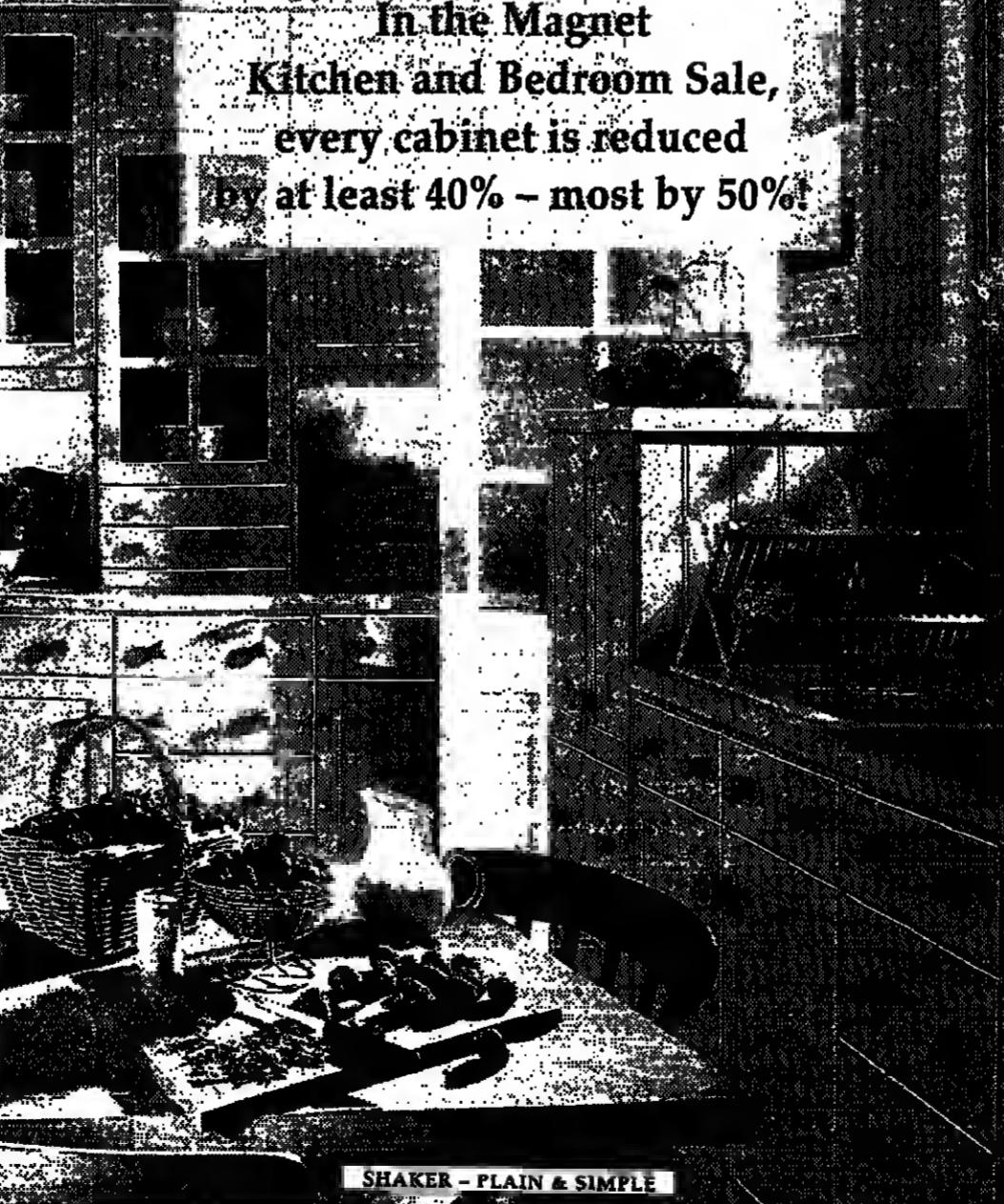
Upcoming documentaries include the story of Britain's secret "collusion" with France and Israel in *The Suez Crisis* to mark the 40th anniversary of the conflict, and film premieres include Al Pacino in *Carlito's Way*, Sharon Stone in *Sliver*, and Michael Douglas in *Falling Down*.

Giving a

Papers clear  
of contempt  
Knights tria

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# Giving a new chance to an old forest friend

KATE WATSON-SMYTH

A national scheme to save one of Britain's most endangered species – the red squirrel – from extinction was launched in London yesterday.

At the turn of the century, the creature was so widespread that it was viewed as a pest, but since the introduction of the grey squirrel, its numbers have declined so dramatically that it faces extinction within 20 years.

Dr Tom Lew, senior mammalogist with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, said: "They are declining before our eyes, and if we are going to tip the balance back in favour of red squirrels, we must conserve the few we have left until their habitat can be changed to suit them".

Only about 160,000 red squirrels survive, in just a few areas of the country, compared with about 2.5 million greys. There are colonies in forests in Scotland and parts of Wales, as well as a few outposts in Cumbria and Northumbria. Small populations still survive near Thetford in Norfolk, Cannock Chase in Staffordshire and on the Isle of Wight, where the grey has failed to establish itself. The grey is so much stronger, that within 15 years of arriving in an area, the red squirrels have usually completely disappeared.

Now, the JNCC has produced a plan for foresters,



Afterlife: A taxidermist at work. The 'grey menace' means all red squirrels could be museum pieces in 20 years. Photograph: Will Walker/North News

landowners and local groups to encourage the preservation of the red squirrel. This includes the planting of coniferous trees (its natural habitat) and thinning out some deciduous

forests. Grey squirrels are to be discouraged from foraging in red territory by depriving them of their footholds in the forests.

Reds love ripe hazelnuts, but because the greys can digest

them before they mature, the reds eventually starve to death.

In some areas, where the threat from the greys is extreme, the population will be controlled, but there are no

plans to exterminate the breed.

Dr Lew said: "There are two time-scales here. The first is to preserve the red squirrels we have, and the second is to provide them with the correct

environment to thrive, away from the grey squirrels.

"This is going to take us decades, but if we don't do it we will lose the red squirrel forever."

## Britain's other destructive imports

Grey squirrels were brought into Britain from North America in 1876 by a Cheshire landowner who wanted an exotic addition to his estate. Since then, several other exotic breeds have been brought into the country, only to wreak havoc among our indigenous animals.

THE AMERICAN MINK was brought over from America at the turn of the century and bred for its fur. Several escaped after the Second World War and they can now be found all over the country. It is semi-aquatic and lives along the banks of rivers, where it eats water voles and moorhens.

THE MUNTJAC DEER was introduced from China in the early 1900s. The size of a small dog, it is thought to have escaped from the Duke of Bedford's estate at Woburn Abbey. They eat large quantities of bluebells, which are in decline, and will often deprive the native roe deer of food.

THE COYPU was also imported for its fur, but when the industry collapsed, many farmers simply released them into the wild. The coypu, a South American rodent, has big yellow teeth and resembles an aggressive beaver. It was introduced in the late 1980s but only after it had caused significant damage to canals in East Anglia.

THE AMERICAN BULLFROG was probably brought over by enthusiastic animal lovers looking for an exotic pet. However, it grows to about eight inches in size and is then released by the horrified owner. Once out in the wild it feasts on our indigenous frogs.

THE AMERICAN CRAYFISH was introduced as an alternative to British lobster but it brought disease with it. Those that have escaped from fish farms are spreading a type of plague among the Signal crayfish.

THE NEW ZEALAND FLATWORM has been a source of grief to gardeners for some years. Believed to have been brought over by mistake in the soil of imported plants, it has proceeded to munch its way through large quantities of earthworms.

### First, shoot three rodents ...

For those who would like to take advantage of the huge population, here is a recipe taken from Shoot and Cook, by Old Harry.

**GREY SQUIRREL WITH PRUNES**  
Ingredients: 3 squirrels; 2/3 tablespoons of butter; 2 onions; 12 dried prunes; 3 tablespoons of wine vinegar; a pinch of thyme; 1 tablespoon of flour; salt and pepper.

Skin, clean and joint the squirrels and leave them to soak in cold water for 30 minutes. Brown the joints in a large pan and then set aside. Put the onions and butter into the pan and fry. Add the flour, vinegar, prunes and salt and pepper. Add the onions and the fat and pepper to taste. Cook for about one hour, until the meat is tender, then add the prunes, reduce the heat and simmer for about 45 minutes.

Next, make a roux with the stock, blend and add to the casserole and leave to thicken. Serve with potatoes.

## Papers cleared of contempt in Knights trial

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES  
Legal Affairs Editor

Pre-trial reporting of a fight involving Geoff Knights, the boyfriend of *EastEnders* actress Gillian Taylforth, did not break the contempt laws – despite the sensational halting of his subsequent criminal trial because coverage in the tabloids had been oppressive.

The surprise ruling from the High Court yesterday was seen as giving the go ahead to trial by media. But in answer to charges brought by the Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, under the 1981 Contempt of Court Act, Lord Justice Schiemann and Mr Justice Smedley insisted it was quite possible for a judge to stop a criminal trial because of prejudice caused by the totality of press coverage, but for no one individual publication to be guilty of contempt.

Sir Nicholas had asked the court to fine the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Star*, *The Sun* and the now-defunct *Today* after Judge Roger Sanders stopped the trial of Knights on charges of wounding Martin Davies, the soap star's chauffeur, with intent. The judge ruled that pre-trial coverage had been "unlawful, misleading, scandalous and malicious", and "so unfair, outrageous and oppressive" that a fair trial was impossible.

It was thought to have been the first time adverse publicity alone had led a judge to halt a trial. The Act outlaws publication of material that would

cause a "substantial risk of serious prejudice" to a trial and bites from the moment of arrest.

Between them the papers detailed Knights' previous convictions for violence, interviewed witnesses and gave exaggerated accounts of the alleged crime. After the arrest of Mr Knights in April 1995 "what one would have expected to be treated as *sub judice* became an opportunity for certain newspaper editors to take it upon themselves to try Mr Knights in their columns," Judge Sanders said.

One of the flaws of the 1981 Act is that it ignores the cumulative effect of publicity. Each report has to be examined individually to see whether it could have influenced a juror. An additional feature of the case was that Knights "coloured his past" had already been the subject of massive publicity.

The judges said it was "difficult to see how any one of the publications . . . created any greater risk of serious prejudice than that which had already been created".

Philip Havers, for the Attorney General, said the press "may well conclude that they have very considerable freedom to publish what they choose at the time of arrest". Leave to appeal was refused and Sir Nicholas will now have to apply directly to the Law Lords.

The exercise has so far cost the taxpayer around £250,000. The papers' costs were ordered to be paid out of central funds.

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## news

CHRIS BLACKHURST  
Westminster Correspondent

Peter Davis, director-general of Oflot, the National Lottery regulator, was heavily criticised by an all-party group of MPs yesterday for taking free flights from one of the members of the Camelot consortium, the game's operator.

Mr Davis was on holiday and was unavailable for comment on the damning report from the powerful Commons Public Accounts Committee

(PAC). National Heritage, the department Mr Davis answers to, said it would study the report and respond in due course.

While the report was not unexpected – Mr Davis was roared by MPs who appeared before them last December – the severity of the criticism, high by the exacting standards of the PAC and unprecedented for an industry watchdog, raises questions about Mr Davis's future.

To heighten his discomfiture, the committee not only said it was "unwise" of him to accept the free flights, and that he had made "serious errors of judgement", they were also "unimpressed" by his reasoning that the trips were made only after the lottery licence had been awarded by him to Camelot.

The report also fuelled the continuing row between Ollin and Richard Branson, the Virgin chief, over the rejection of his bid to run the draw, by highlighting questions over G-Tech, the lottery specialist and member of the Camelot group. The

committee were concerned at the information they had which raised doubts about the fitness of G-Tech ... This included suggestions of undesirable business practices by G-Tech in obtaining lottery contracts in the United States, including alleged corrupt payments in California, Kentucky and New Jersey made to various persons, including a state Senator."

It was vital, the committee said, that Mr Davis investigate any allegations of impropriety about the Lottery. They wel-

comed his decision to hold an internal inquiry into the claim by Mr Branson that Guy Snowden, chief operating officer of G-Tech had tried to bribe him. Last week, this inquiry cleared Mr Snowden of the charge. However, Mr Branson refused to give evidence. The bribery charge will now be settled in the courts when Mr Snowden's action for libel against Mr Branson is heard.

By then, Mr Davis may have lost his job. The committee said he was "unwise" to use a corporate aircraft owned by G-Tech – which has a 22 per cent stake in Camelot – on a fact-finding mission around the US in October 1994. Mr Davis's reasoning that it was cheaper for the taxpayer cut little ice.

The committee also criticised his decision to stay at the New York home of Carl Manges, head of a US investment firm with a 25 per cent holding in G-Tech. The MPs said they recognised that the friendship between the two men's wives pre-dated the creation of the

Lottery. But they said: "We regard it as of vital importance that the director-general should be seen by the public to be completely impartial."

The MPs also said they were "unimpressed" by Mr Davis's argument that he had accepted the free flights only after he had announced his decision to award the licence to Camelot. "In our view, the director-general's decisions to use G-Tech corporate aircraft represented serious errors of judgement on his part," the report said.

**Housing:** The countryside is under pressure

## Towns to grow in green fields

CHARLIE BAIN

Fields will disappear under bricks and concrete if land is to be found for the millions of homes needed for a growing number of households, a major study revealed yesterday.

The Government estimates that almost 4.5 million new homes are needed over the next 20 years. But an investigation into where they may be built reveals a mismatch between demand and supply of land – and this could have a dramatic effect on the landscape of southern England.

As people continue to leave the cities, planners say that "large-scale use" of undeveloped land is "inevitable".

Their study, produced by the Town and Country Planning Association and the Joseph Rowntree Trust, warns that while the Government policy of using former industrial sites for development means that half of all housing is now built on recycled or "brownfield" land, this will decline in the years ahead.

Professor Peter Hall, of University College, London, who co-edited the report, said that the pressure to move out of cities "threatens current policies which encourage sustainable, environmentally sensitive development".

Demand for land in the south east is strongest west of London, but most former industrial land



lies to the east. In the north west, land is available in Manchester and Liverpool but most new housing is needed in Cheshire, Cumbria and rural Lancashire. In Yorkshire and Humberside demand is in the north – but most brownfield sites are in South Yorkshire.

Solutions to finding enough land, says the report, include spreading into protected green-belt countryside, building along rail corridors, filling vacant sites within urban areas and creating new villages and towns.

Tony Burton, a senior planner with the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) said: "Commitment to urban renewal should be the starting point in the debate."

It is significant that the idea of new towns has returned, af-

ter nearly a decade of intense opposition exemplified by anger over plans to build over Foxley Wood in Berkshire.

Now new towns are on the

drawing-board for Hampshire, Kent, Berkshire, Essex, Herefordshire, East Sussex, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Gloucestershire and Devon, plus "holt-on" settlements next to Bristol, Swindon, Peterborough, Worcester, Dardford and Glasgow.

In January a 250m "bolt-on" new town complete with 5,500 homes, to be built next to Peterborough, was announced by the Hanso Trust. In Hampshire, Eagle Star have drawn up plans to build an 8,000-home new town at Micheldever, on 1,000 acres of arable land beside the main railway line from Southampton to Waterloo.

While the dogs worked with gusto,

more than 1,000 potential buyers scrutinised their every move in the main arena at Malvern, near Worcester.

The six Brecknock Hill Cheviots which the dogs were rounding up looked decidedly frisky. But anctioneer Mike Thompson remained cool as one dog chased a sheep out of the arena and then a keen young bitch bit a ewe in the

flock. "The bitch is only being friendly," he told the crowd.

Talk among insiders was of how one Welsh farmer had just sold a top sheepdog for £5,000 in a private sale. But Aubrey Hughes, 63, was content after his 18-month-old sheepdog Sam was knocked down to a Derbyshire farmer for £1,110. Farmers see it as money well spent. "It would probably take four or five men to do a

sheepdog's work," said Harcourt Lloyd, 55, from Trefeglwys, in Powys, whose dog Joe was third in the Welsh Open Championships this year.

The sale catalogue paid tribute to all the dogs, including four-year-old Fan, (sire: Spot, dam: Trim): "Outstanding farm bitch. Travels on farm bike and follows horse ... will move anything. Good bitches should come into season soon. Highly rated."

**Sheepdog for sale: travels on farm bike and follows horse**

RICHARD SMITH

It was a nerve-wracking time for the flat-capped farmers waving crooks and calling the tune with whistles and shouts of "come by", as a select band of 45 working sheepdogs with names like Moss and Floss were put through their paces yesterday during the big sheepdog auction at Sheep '96.

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drawing-board for Hampshire, Kent, Berkshire, Essex, Herefordshire, East Sussex, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Gloucestershire and Devon, plus "holt-on" settlements next to Bristol, Swindon, Peterborough, Worcester, Dardford and Glasgow.

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دكتور العامل

Railways are back. Over the past few years people and governments the world over have realised they are the only environmentally friendly means of mass transport for passengers and freight. Congestion, combined with the social and environmental cost which is the result of unrestricted use of motor vehicles, have led to a return to what was decried in the post-war decades as an outmoded form of transport, doomed to be superseded by the all-conquering motor.

Immense sums are being poured into railways and organisations which had often dwindled into bloated bureaucracies are being reshaped on more businesslike lines.

Over the next few weeks the *Independent* will be reflecting this renaissance of rail the world over in a series of articles. They will not be mere accounts of Great (or Lesser) railway journeys.

They will be snapshots of every aspect of rail travel, from the economic to the architectural, reflecting the sheer excitement engendered by every aspect of a rail journey as well

## Every country gets the trains that it deserves

as the whole world of railways, trains, stations – and railwaymen.

We hope these reflections will provide a picture of the way railways remain an essential part of social and economic life of countries throughout the world.

We also hope they will not only fascinate our readers as much as they do the *Independent* staff but also provoke them to think about what we should be doing to encourage the new era of rail travel.

The series is based on a simple observation: that today, as in the past, railway systems represent a country's capacity to organise its transport systems and thus, by implication other less obvious public functions, in a sane and economic manner.

It has often been said newspapers represent a nation talking to itself. Similarly, railways represent a society, a community, in motion. Their re-emergence is an echo of the way that

during the 19th century they created the modern world.

Nations such as Belgium, Italy and Canada could not have existed without them. Empires steamed along the lines built by the conquerors. They defined time, they defined distance, they liberated man's imagination.

The industrial revolution depended on them. They alone could transport the masses of food required to feed growing cities. The railway between London and Wiltshire was known as the Milky Way and the fisherman of far-off Cornwall timed their arrivals in harbour to coincide with the train timetable.

Mass movement of people, as emigrants and later as tourists, relied on them. The very stations were rightly called "temples of steam" and remain some of the finest monuments to the Victorian age.

Some of these themes find their echoes today. Splendid stations, like Nicholas Grim-



RIDING THE IRON ROAD

A community in motion, a nation on the move; **Nicholas Faith**, introducing our summer series, says railways are undergoing a worldwide renaissance

Yet they are recognisably the same means of transport first developed to carry coal between the mines and rivers and the sea in north-east England in the 1820s.

The new ultra-fast trains, running at up to 200mph through France and Spain and Germany and Japan and Italy – still rely on steel wheels running on steel rails which are still set, as in George Stephenson's day, 4ft 8 1/2in (1.435m) apart.

So, of course, is Eurostar, the train service which, steadily but surely, is drawing London and south-east England into a closer relationship with the Continent than with far-off, and equally foreign, Scotland and thus doing more for our links with Europe than a thousand speeches.

In *The Old Patagonian Express*, Paul Theroux summed up the feeling that today, as in the past, railways provided an accurate reflection of the moral, cultural, social, economic state of a particular

country. "The seedy, distressed country has seedy, distressed trains; the proud, efficient nation is similarly reflected in its rolling stock, as Japan is."

There is hope in India because the trains are considered vastly more important than the donkey wagons some Indians drive.

By these standards most countries throughout the world are striving towards the better society represented by a superior railway system and prepared to pay heavily for the benefits.

They are building tunnels – between Denmark and Sweden as well as under the Channel – and they are constructing high-speed lines, not only throughout Western Europe, but also in Korea – and between Moscow and St Petersburg. They can even be adapted to take masses of lorries off the roads – in the United States, road-haulage companies are transferring much of their long-haul traffic to the railways.

which had been pronounced near dead until the late 1970s, but which have been miraculously rejuvenated by freedom from government regulation.

And, finally, how does Britain fare in these comparisons? Bluntly, as a country which is slipping inexorably into the Third World.

Britain, a crowded island eminently suited to rail travel, is the only country apart from the United States unable to contemplate abolishing the subsidies given to road transport in the form of company allowances, ludicrously low taxation of heavy lorries, and relatively cheap petrol.

Privatisation, this government's magic cure-all, is simply a pathetic attempt to evade society's responsibilities towards its transport systems, combined with a fragmentation which makes the simplest and most obvious investment an intolerably prolonged affair – and ensures that the rails themselves, unlike the roads, let alone the rails in other countries, actually have to make a profit.

Nicholas Faith

## Lebanon dreams of peaceful connections



Rack and ruin: A Swiss locomotive that once hauled Kaiser Wilhelm's train over the Lebanon mountains rests amid war wreckage at Beirut central station

Photograph: Robert Fisk

Beirut — Just opposite Abdullah Chehah's desk is a sheaf of Cellophane-covered files that may constitute one of the biggest – and, sadly, the emptiest – dreams in railway history. As Mr Chehah opens page after page of maps, a brand-new railway network for post-war Lebanon runs across the paper.

It snakes, green and red, through the ancient Crusader port of Byblos, follows the permanent way laid down by the Royal Engineers and Australian army in 1941, cuts inland through the Hezbollah slums of south Beirut, then streaks south to the port of Tyre, scarcely 12 miles from the Israeli border. The two-track, 120-kph electric railway would cost £329m.

Reality, however, is just a platform away. For Mr Chehah – who rejoices in the title of Director-General of Lebanese State Railways – does not have a single working train to his name. The closest locomotives to his office stand only a hundred yards from his door, rust-covered and weed-enshrouded, wheels strangled in bushes, the pride of the Ottoman Empire's 19th-century Levantine railway system, pock-marked with 20th-century bullet holes.

The great Swiss Winterthur rack-and-pinion locos carried the Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm across the mountains to the Roman ruins of Baalbek in 1898, freighted Turkish troops towards Syria during the First World War and starred in numerous Lebanese films until brought low by the outbreak of civil war in 1975.

That is the gentlest way of describing the fate of the Lebanese railway system. Across the country, the great green-painted steam locos of the French mandate lie rusting on broken sidings, their funnels and cabs and tenders the haunt of birds and rats, their tracks littered with the wreckage of flaking carriages once purchased from the railways of the British Raj. At Rayak – the twin terminus with Baghdad for the original Orient Express – the Syrian army have camped amid the ancient steamers, their gun emplacements sprouting amid the steam-pipes and pistons, a bunch of anti-aircraft guns dug in near the engine sheds.

Perhaps armies are psychologically drawn towards the railways that carried their ancestors to and from the wars of the early 20th century. In Tripoli, the old PLO front line, now a pile of tattered grey sandbags, runs in front of the locomotive sheds while Syrian special forces troops have installed themselves behind the grass-covered turntables. Still dripping the last oil poured

into their machinery more than two decades ago, the big 4-6-2s rot in sidings close to the 15th-century Tower of the Lions. One of these locos has received a direct hit from an artillery shell that smashed through the cab and ricocheted into a decaying goods wagon. All are peppered with bullet holes.

Widely believed to be of French manufacture, it took one of the world's leading enthusiasts of Levantine railways – a Manchester rabbi – to identify them correctly as German. Originally pulling the big expresses of the pre-First World War Reichsbahn, they were ceded to France as war reparations under the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and transferred by France to its newly mandated territory in Lebanon and Syria, acquired under the League of Nations at the same time Britain took control of Palestine and Transjordan. For more than half a century, they pulled passenger expresses between Tripoli and the Syrian city of Homs, only to end their days when Lebanon broke apart in 1976. Thus did German locomotives of the Kaiser's Reich fall victim to the bullets and shells of Lebanese Christian militias, Syria and the PLO.

Mr Chehah wants to restore the Rayak railhead and reopen the line to Homs, re-linking Tripoli with the Syrian city at the same time. He is toying with the idea of restoring a rack-and-pinion track over the mountains but agrees that a new permanent way and new tunnels would be needed for the system. In the last years of the civil war, much of the track was torn up. The Christian Phalange militia ripped up the rails of the old British army ammunition line along the coast south of Beirut to use the rail-bed as a military supply route for lorry-mounted mortars. Further south, holiday chalets have been built over the track.

In 1982, the Israelis bombed down the last rack-and-pinion railway bridge east of Dahr al-Baidur after failing to hit the main mountain highway. They tried – and failed – to destroy the stout, French-built tunnel at Mdeirej in which the Syrian army had stored ammunition. But the railways of Lebanon had other, less militant enemies. When I took the last working train from Beirut to Byblos five years ago – a roaring Polish diesel pulling two tiny, bullet-splattered wooden carriages – the driver had to stop 18 times because cars had been parked on the tracks. In the southern suburbs, entire eight-storey apartment blocks – illegally built but none the less permanent, stand on top of the permanent way.

Mr Chehah is unimpressed. "We own the line and we're not paying compensation," he says firmly.

But his resolution falters when you ask about costs. "The project for the new railway must be passed by parliament and the cabinet. It will be ... built, operated and transport provided by a single company. But it depends a great deal on the 'peace process'." A dodgy prospect, I suggest, especially after Benjamin Netanyahu's election victory in Israel. "I am not a politician," Mr Chehah replies carefully. "But I would say that the entire project depends to-

tally on the 'peace process'." And then, of course, it all becomes clear. The new main line to Tyre is supposed to continue further south, through the ruins of the Roman forum at Tyre, down the bed of the old track to the border at Naqoura to link up with the old British main line north of Nahariya. Beirut's railway line is being projected on the assumption it will go all the way to Israel, on to Tel Aviv, even to Cairo.

And there the dreams have to end. The Lebanese government still pays its 150 railway staff for work on a track that has not seen a train in two decades but Mr Chehah is being hived off to work on the bureaucracy of this year's Lebanese elections. I ask Mr Chehah if a steam train will ever run again in Lebanon. Slowly, looking at his desk, he shakes his head. "No, they'll not run again. I don't want to get rid of them. We will keep them for now. I had a thought of maybe a Lehmoss railway museum. Unless there is someone else interested." British, I suggest? And Mr Chehah's face lights up.

Robert Fisk

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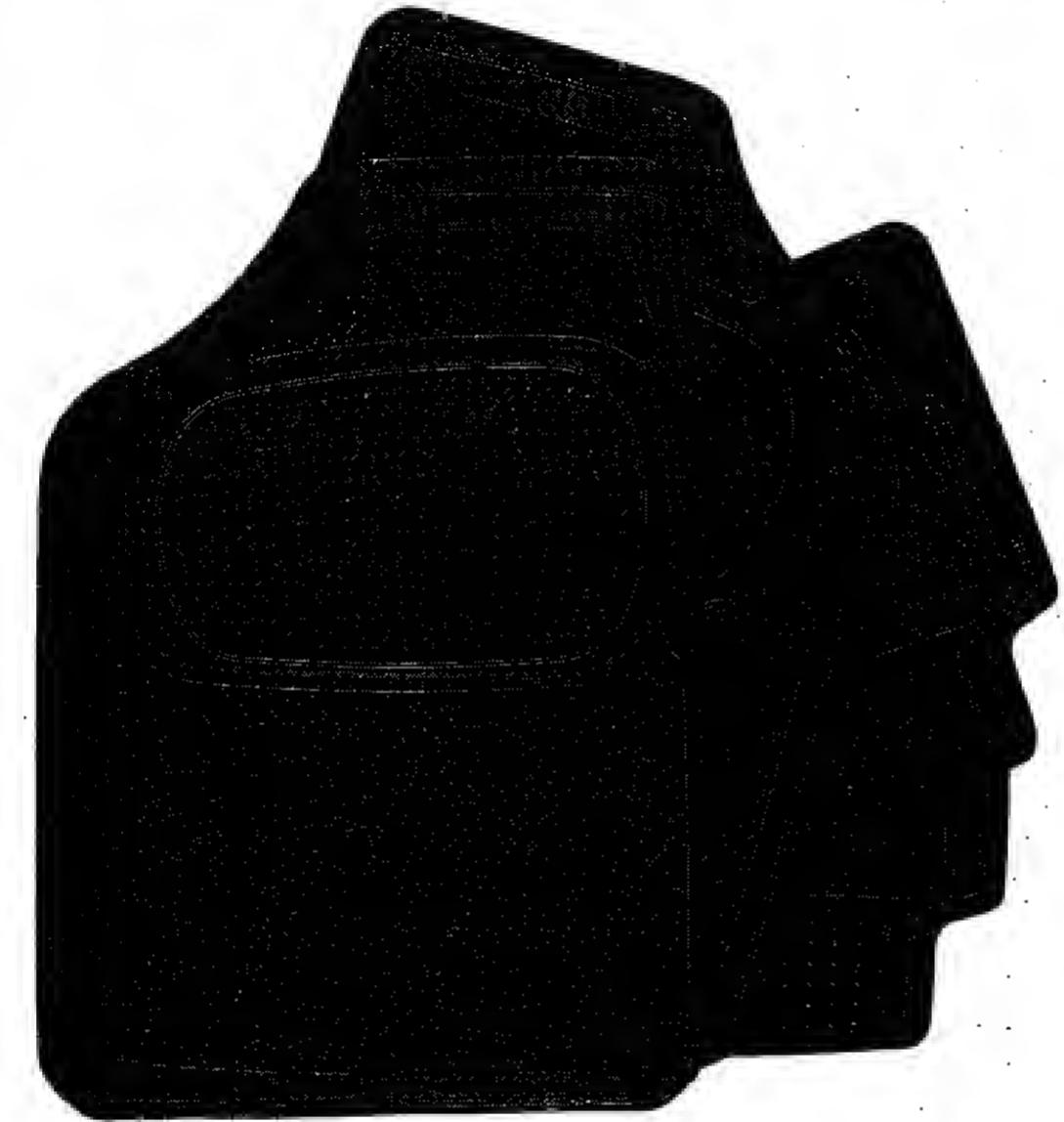
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مكتبة العامل

## international

## Atlanta 'hero' denies placing bomb

PHIL DAVISON

Atlanta

For several days, he was trumpeted as the all-American hero of the Olympics. Richard Jewell, a podgy 17-stone security guard and former policeman, was the man who had spotted the suspicious knapsack that turned out to be a bomb in Atlanta's crowded Centennial Park last Saturday. "Had it not been for Richard, there could have been dozens of fatalities instead of two," his colleagues said.

Yesterday, FBI agents questioned Mr Jewell for the second day and searched the Atlanta apartment where he lives with his mother, looking for evidence that might show he planted the bomb himself. "We are treating him as a suspect," an FBI agent said, although Mr Jewell was not under detention.

He could be seen yesterday, sitting on a stairwell outside the apartment with FBI agents while others conducted a detailed search inside.

FBI sources said evidence against Mr Jewell, described by former colleagues as having been "a gung-ho cop with a history of over-zealous policing", was so far only circumstantial. The case against the bomber would hinge on evidence still being studied in FBI laboratories in Washington. That includes fragments of the pipe bomb, a green knapsack it was left in and the nearby pay-phone from which a warning call was made about 20 minutes before the bomb went off.

Mr Jewell, who had gone from talk show to talk show in the first three days after the bomb, appearing as a shy, retiring hero, denied involvement. "Did you do it?" A reporter shouted as he arrived at local FBI offices for questioning. "No, sir, I did not do this," he replied. FBI special agent David Tubb told a crowd of reporters outside the flat: "This search does not constitute evidence of guilt. [It] is part of an ongoing investigative process. Mr Jewell has been

fully co-operative. He has not been charged with any crime."

The news that the would-be hero may have been the bomber stunned Atlanta, still trying to come to terms with the blast that ripped through Centennial Park, the hustling social point of the Olympics, during a concert at 1.30am last Saturday.

Many Atlantans, Olympic officials and athletes expressed relief that a suspect had been found. Many were shocked to realise that a single person may have been responsible for an in-

cident which came close to halting the Games. That the bomber may have been a security guard assigned to protect Centennial Park added to the disbelief.

The FBI came under criticism yesterday for apparently leaking the news that Mr Jewell was a suspect before having enough evidence to detain or charge him.

First Lady Hillary Clinton visited the site of the bomb yesterday and saw what has become a kind of shrine, with hundreds of thousands of visitors leaving flowers, their national flags, and

goodwill messages. It was at this site where Mr Jewell gave one of his "shy hero" interviews. When the park was reopened to the public on Tuesday morning, he was interviewed live by Katie Couric of NBC. "You did the right thing," Ms Couric told him as thousands of people cheered.

"If my 15 minutes of fame was finding this package and saving some lives, that will be fine with me," he said in another interview.

Robert Fisk's *Essay*, page 16

## Muslim plea over Mostar

TONY BARBER

Europe Editor

Bosnia's Muslim-led government demanded international action against Croatia yesterday to overcome a crisis in the divided city of Mostar that is threatening Bosnia's first post-war elections next month.

Bosnia's Prime Minister, Hasan Muratovic, told a meeting of Islamic countries in Geneva: "This is the last moment for the international community to direct its activity towards the Republic of Croatia to bring about the implementation of what it signed [in the Dayton peace agreement]."

Croat political leaders in Mostar, supported by President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, have refused to accept the results of municipal elections in June that gave a narrow victory to their Muslim rivals. The Croats have boycotted what was supposed to be a newly united city council, thereby perpetuating Mostar's division into Croat and Muslim sectors.

International mediators say that, if the Croat boycott is allowed to continue, it will discredit the all-Bosnian elections on 14 September. Even without the Croat boycott, the elections are likely to be flawed because of Bosnian Serb opposition to fundamental elements of the Dayton agreement.

Mr Muratovic appealed to the outside world to freeze economic relations with Croatia as punishment for its refusal to make the Bosnian Croats dissolve their self-styled state of Herzeg-Bosnia. The Dayton agreement stipulated Herzeg-Bosnia's abolition, and Bosnian Muslims say the Croats' non-compliance threatens to destroy the Muslim-Croat federation, designed as a cornerstone of the peace deal.

The European Union, which has administered Mostar since 1994, intends to pull out next Sunday unless the Bosnian Croats agree to join the city council. But EU officials and mediators such as Michael Steiner, the deputy international High Representative for Bosnia, doubt that the Bosnian Croats will budge unless prodded by Mr Tudjman.



Returning heroes: Djamel Bouras (left) whose first-time victory – a gold in the judo – has brought optimism to France over its 'cesspit' council estates, and Marie-Jo Pérec (right), who retained her 400-metre gold

## French heroes from wrong side of tracks

MARY DEJEVSKY

Paris

With a national record of 32 Olympic medals to their name – so far – you would have thought that the French would be dancing around the Arc de Triomphe, or at least cracking open a bottle or two of champagne in the Bois de Boulogne.

With a population almost identical to that of Britain, France has won more than three times as many medals, 12 of them gold, and lies third in the medals table.

At yesterday's cabinet meeting, President Chirac joked that he was awarding the sports minister, Guy Drut, himself a former Olympic champion, a metaphorical gold medal in recognition of the French team's success at Atlanta. The congratulations from on high are lavish. Mr Chirac sent a long message to Marie-Jo Pérec when she retained her 400m championship, applauding the example she had set to young athletes, and quoting from a poet of her native Guadeloupe. The Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, appended a handwritten note to his message, saying: "Well done! I embrace you."

The media, in amazed ecstasy at the French performance, are promoting the idea that the medal-winners represent the "better face" of French youth. Much has been made of the fact that many of the medal-winners, especially in the early events like fencing and judo, were hitherto

to "unknowns" from immigrant families, from modest backgrounds, or from the further reaches of the French empire. "Where did all these stars come from?" asked the pro-government daily *Figaro* in surprise, before drawing an optimistic lesson for social and racial integration.

The victory of Djamel Bouras in the judo was hailed as the first time a *ber*, a non-white Frenchman of north African origin, had won an Olympic gold. His call home, and his joyous family gathered on the sofa in their council house were held up as proof that France's housing estates – portrayed last year as the cesspits of the nation, seething with ethnic unrest – were not such a failure after all.

Two other gold medallists, a woman judo winner and a cyclist, with previous Olympic disappointments to their name, were treated as paragons of the wholesome, country life. The message was that the real heart and soul of the country is to be found in the much-ridiculed "France profonde".

For the French government, the nation's success in Atlanta has only one downside: a nagging worry about how much it could cost. Olympic victors receive generous rewards from the government, up to 250,000 francs – more than £50,000 – for a gold medal.

Otherwise, the nation's success at Atlanta should be a godsend. The President and the Prime Minister have spent the

best part of a year blaming a nebulous "feel-bad" factor for the economy's failure to grow, and for the persistence of high unemployment. What better tonic for the national psyche than a tally of Olympic medals?

Unfortunately, little of this seems to be filtering through. France is on holiday. And when the French go on holiday they have better things to do than watch television – which include doing the walking, cycling, white-water kayaking, riding etc, themselves.

But even if the French were not – physically and psychologically – on holiday, the "feel-good" benefits of the Olympics might still be less than the government would hope. "Can Olympic medals really be any sort of consolation," wrote a reader from Aix-en-Provence in a letter to a national newspaper, "to a country that is in such a parlous state?" And he drew a surprising analogy with Grand Prix racing.

Which would you rather be, he asked: Volkswagen, the market leader, that has never taken part; Renault, which has won all the championships but is now withdrawing from a promising market; or Ferrari, the legendary champion fallen on hard times? "I would prefer French society to be more like Volkswagen than Renault," he said, unpatriotically.

A good many more than 32 Olympic medals will be needed to lift this particular Frenchman out of his gloom.

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# Sportsmen give us a good run for our money

Why all the hand wringing? Suddenly half the nation seems to be convinced first that the Olympics is boring and, second, that Britain is in terminal, lamentable sporting decline. Commentators are muttering that the Games have been uninspiring this year. And everyone else is moaning about our paltry medal performance. John Major has proposed a new Sports Academy to solve the problem. Meanwhile, Tony Blair has called for an urgent review to improve our future Olympic performance.

Yet both complaints are nonsense. The Games are as great as ever, and British sporting prowess is as respectable as ever. If we want to be brilliant, rather than just respectable, we should stow our hands in our pockets for the extra cash to match other countries' sports investment. But if the public (understandably) can find better things to do with its money, we should all stop whingeing and just enjoy the Games instead.

So Linford didn't get his gold in the 100m. So Sally dropped out of the hurdles. So we didn't see a single British face on the judo podium this year. So what? The Olympic Games are a brilliant spectacle, regardless of fate or our British competitors.

Consider the incredible twists and turns of the gymnasts. Korbut and Comaneci, eat your heart out. Today's

gymnasts leap higher and spin faster than yesterday's heroes ever did. Think of the drama and brute strength of the weight-lifting. The Russian Andrei Chernenko won the gold medal by lifting an astonishing record-breaking 260kg. Carl Lewis leapt 8.5m to win his ninth Olympic gold medal. And Charles Austin defied gravity, soaring over 2.39m in the high jump.

If we are disappointed with the Games, it can only be because we set too much store by the performance of a few athletes swathed in the Union Jack. We would presumably have condemned Euro '96 as a boring waste of time and money had England been knocked out in the first round.

But we shouldn't get so depressed about British sport. With our medal tally just staggering into double figures, we have admittedly performed worse than in previous years. But we shouldn't overreact. Some of our best performers this year were carrying injuries; Gunnell, Holmes, Jackson, Ohre. It's a shame, but it happens.

You can't judge the state of British sport on the basis of one Olympics. Our worst performance this century took place in St Louis in the US in 1904. We won no gold medals at all, and only one silver, and one bronze. Pathetic huh? Yet only four years later in London, we won a spectacular 56 gold medals, 50 silver and 39 bronze. It was our best performance of the century (although



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it did set the world complaining about the bias of British judges).

Half a century on, in Helsinki 1952 – the performance that Atlanta has been compared to – Britain won only one gold medal, and only 11 medals in total. Yet four years later in Melbourne we picked up six gold medals – something we haven't managed to duplicate since then.

So, it is perfectly possible for the British team to exhibit widely different performances from one Olympics to the next, as generations of athletes emerge and then age. The difference between our Atlanta performance and

our success during the Eighties is rather small in comparison.

Of course we could do better. We could aspire to more than the five golds we picked up in Moscow, Los Angeles, Seoul and Barcelona. Australia has a population less than half the size of Britain's, yet it won nine gold medals in 1992, and looks set to do as well in Atlanta. But we will need money, not hand wringing, to emulate their success.

Supporting Olympic athletes is an expensive business. They need money to live on while they train full-time, specialist coaches, expert medical support, and proper facilities. Paul Palmer, one

of Britain's few silver medallists this year, still relies on his parents for his keep. Young sports men and women have trouble making ends meet.

The Australians established centres of sporting excellence – top-class academies – to support their sports women and men. They have been ranking in the medalists ever since. The French have invested heavily in sport – and they have 13 gold medals to show for it.

If the politicians really think it's important for Britain to do much better in the Olympics, they could follow a similar route here. Alternatively, they could shut up and leave well alone. We get the sports we want and pay for. For example, football has plenty of money to train its youngsters and transfer its stars because the public are prepared to pay to watch it, either in the stadium or in their sitting rooms.

In the US, popular support for track events has generated sporting scholarships at private universities and colleges across the country. Even here, established stars of athletics such as Christie and Gunnell can pick up plenty of cash in appearance fees and sponsorship so they can pay for their own top-class training. But the sports that struggle for funds are those which attract little attention in Britain outside the Olympic weeks; they can't raise much money from sponsorship, spectators or television deals. If the public don't have the enthusiasm to support these athletes

directly, it isn't clear that they should get much taxpayers' money either.

New money for elite sports will have to come from somewhere; perhaps from higher taxes, cuts in sports facilities for the public, or lottery money that could have been spent on charities. These are serious sacrifices for the sake of two weeks of feeling good about ourselves every four years. Might we be happier enjoying our occasional Olympic successes, and spending our own money on sport for all instead?

## No cure for the seven-year itch

It's official. Testosterone patches won't cure a male mid-life crisis. Oestrogen patches – also known as HRT – help many women sail through and past the menopause unencumbered by the mood swings, exhaustion and ill-health that lack of oestrogen can cause.

It isn't so simple for middle-aged men. Lack of testosterone is no excuse for those who leave their families for young bimbos, panic about their career failures and wallow in morbid self-pity. Many abandoned wives never believed it for a moment. Their absconding husbands, as they have always known, are suffering (if that is the word) from too much testosterone, not too little.

## No clear case for a single currency

Sir: Gwyn Davies's excellent piece on EMU ("What would life have been like inside EMU?", 29 July) deserves a careful and detailed response. He mentions to the outset that his exercise is subject to many caveats but does not return to them at the end.

In my view there is no clear case either way that tells us whether to join a single currency or not. There are factors on both sides to which one can attach probabilities and come out whichever way one chooses but the exercise is fraught with many judgements. In Mr Davies's case the calculations that he makes are backward looking but they are also partial. Thus while he is correct that if everything else had remained the same and a Waigell-type fine had been in operation the UK could have paid as much as £30bn, by the same token the effect of lower interest rates on debt servicing and indeed on lower debt, as interest costs are reduced, needs to be set alongside the £30bn.

A lower interest rate of about 3 to 4 per cent on a debt of, say, around £200bn as of 1988 for about four years is not to be sniffed at. So if he has to quantify one he has to do the other as well.

The single currency issue is beclouded because each side states its own case. The need is to list the advantages and disadvantages of both options clearly setting out the issues over which we can differ both in terms of likely impact and the probability of the impact occurring and then study the range of answers with probability attached before a conclusion can be arrived at. This would be a rational way of proceeding.

Thus we can balance the gains from lower interest rates along with the likelihood that the Euro will be a strong currency and interest rates will indeed be lower, as against the costs of giving up the interest rate weapon and meeting the costs of higher regional unemployment with inadequate transfer payments. We can balance the freedom to set our own interest rates and exchange rates outside with the likelihood that as in the past devaluation will only yield a temporary gain, and interest rates will be higher, especially on long-dated debt due in the UK's reputation for fiscal profligacy.

Is it too much to hope that even now there is time to set up a group, not political but expert, say in the Institute of Fiscal Studies to get some sense on this question?

Professor The Lord MEGHNAH DESAI  
House of Lords  
London SW1

Sir: Andreas Whittam Smith disagrees with the conclusion of my book *In With the Euro, Out With the Pound* ("We could soon repeat a hasty union", 29 July). Since EMU began with the ERM in 1979, and the Euro is due to come in 1999, 20 years can hardly be called "hasty".

Mr Whittam Smith uses the metaphor of a car with two drivers to condemn the separation of monetary and fiscal policy. Yet this is what we have now with the duff of Chancellor of the Exchequer running fiscal policy and Governor of the Bank of England having a say in monetary policy. Were the Bank of England to be completely independent, as even some Eurosceptics want, the separation would be complete. Yet this is widely acknowledged to be the best



'All is not lost, they gave us a gold for whingeing'

way to keep inflation down and economic growth up. A European Central Bank is likely to be more independent, and to run a better monetary policy, than any national central bank.

Gwyn Davies (29 July) argues that had we been in EMU in 1989, the recession would have been dampened; but then, he says, the inability to devalue would have greatly prolonged the recession, and slowed the recovery". The experience of France suggests that economic growth would have been more stable, and slightly higher on average over the first six years of the 1990s.

Stable growth is better than volatile growth even if the two average the same. Mr Davies also claims that today base rates would be 3.5 in 4 per cent (I agree), "and the consumer would not doubt be embarking on a vibrant boom". A government seeking re-election should then surely seek to opt in to the Euro as soon as possible.

CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON  
London N6

## Turkey needs to be more open

Sir: Taking a swipe at politicians is a favourite occupation of a certain type of journalist. Instead, Tony Barber should take a look at the information about Turkey which comes from non-politicians. The US State Department, the UN Rapporteur on Torture, the UN Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, the Writers in Prison Committee of International

PEN, the Turkish Human Rights Association, and Article XIX present the kind of picture Mr Barber ascribes to the "politicians".

Turkey has the longest entry of any country in the six-monthly case list of the Writers in Prison Committee, and the longest entry in the report of the UN Torture on Torture.

The Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions, M. Bacre Waly Ndiaye, an African jurist, reports that he "continues to be extremely concerned about violations of the right to life in the south-eastern provinces of Turkey". He complains that no progress has been made since 1992 on his request for an invitation to visit Turkey.

If Mr Barber wants Europe to treat Turkey as a friend and equal partner, he should persuade the Turks to adopt a policy of greater transparency. If they have nothing to hide, not only could they invite M. Ndiaye, but also they could lift the ban on Amnesty International and myself entering the country. They could invite the International Red Cross to provide humanitarian services under the Geneva Conventions in the conflict in the south-east, as they have been offering to do for 12 years, and they could invite the OSCE to help solve the conflict, as they are doing everywhere else in the region.

Lord AVEBURY  
Chairman, Parliamentary Human Rights Group  
House of Lords  
London SW1

## Bacteria and the beginning of life

Sir: Charles Arthur's article, "A comet full of soup" (29 July), refers to ideas that we ourselves have espoused over many years. The article gives the impression that Mayo Greenberg was the first to suggest that life arose through the introduction of organic material from comets, rather than in a purely earthbound "primordial soup", whereas one of us already considered an extension of the primordial soup to include the entire solar nebula in *Frontiers of Astronomy* in 1955, long before Professor Greenberg had expressed any opinions on this matter. The evolution of our own ideas on these matters is traced in our most recent book *Our Place in the Cosmos* (Orion, 1996).

Recent developments in astronomy have shown that light absorption properties of cosmic dust are strikingly similar to those of bacteria and spores – as indeed we have argued for nearly two decades. The organic matter in space resembles the stuff of life, and the problem then is to understand how such material is produced. The choice is whether the material is generated biologically, by means of biological replication in suitable sites such as comets, or whether it is produced non-biologically in a way that somehow mimics the living process. We have always thought that the biological option is preferable to invoking a process which is essentially untestable.

Professor Greenberg is quoted in considering this particular option because "Bacteria couldn't survive in space. Ultraviolet would destroy them... the idea of interstellar spores is... nonsensical". Such strongly emotive words surely cannot be justified. Bacterial spores in space are most easily protected from UV radiation because they would inevitably acquire thin coatings of protective carbonaceous material (sunlight lotion).

The humbling lesson of microbiology over the past decade has been to show how exceedingly sturdy bacterial cells are, and how they can survive under the most extreme conditions imaginable. Some species of *micrococcus radiodurans* are known to survive radiation doses equivalent to what would occur in interstellar clouds over millions of years, and of course bacteria in the interiors of comets could survive for indefinite lengths of time.

Our original ideas as described in *Lifecloud* (1978) relating to the need to import life molecules from space is now adopted pretty well without dissent. But the more powerful and radical concept of life coming in the form of fully fledged bacteria is resisted for reasons that are more to do with sociology than science. Professor Greenberg and other scientists in the field who are clamouring for priority over the weaker of the two options that we discussed in *Lifecloud* are lagging nearly two decades behind.

Professor Sir FRED HOYLE

Professor N.C. WICKRAMASINGHE

Cardiff

## Embryos are not commodities

Sir: I read with interest your leading article, "Frozen embryos: the race for a new ethical code" (24 July). I would suggest that an embryo is not "a couple's potential for children" but a child with potential.

Every one of us began life as a single cell newly created when sperm fertilised egg at conception. At this point, a unique individual has inherited characteristics from both parents. Their genes have already determined the baby's hair colour, eye colour, height and so on, and its sex. If this isn't the start of human life, what is?

It is not only Roman Catholics who believe in the sanctity of life. The right of "abandoned" embryos is a clear violation of the 1948 Declaration of Geneva: "I will have the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception..."

I was pleased that you mentioned that very few implantations of frozen embryos are successful. Eighty per cent of couples who enter IVF programmes end with no child. What effect must this have on the couples for whom treatment proves unsuccessful? I would suggest that the reason the parents of so many embryos have "abandoned" them is because of the emotional trauma they must have suffered.

On a positive note, I am glad that the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority plan to ban payment to donors. I hope it stems from the realisation that the embryos are not commodities.

Mrs KAREN A FOWLES

York

## Life, liberty and happiness

Sir: The phrase "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" is not to be found in the US Constitution of 1787 as you maintain (leading article, "Why the Government should give us all a break", 31 July). Rather, it is in the Declaration of Independence from the British Crown, penned by Thomas Jefferson 11 years earlier.

STEVEN HENNING SIEVERTS

London NW6

Non-U not known

Sir: It is misleading to credit Nancy Mitford with the "invention of U and Non-U language" (Obituaries, 25 July) on two counts. No one person invents a language and in this instance the dichotomy was admirably by Professor A.S.C. Ross in a 35-page article in the Finnish scholarly journal *Neophilologische Mitteilungen* in 1954.

It was Ross who coined the terms U and Non-U, but they failed to gain a firm foothold in the language and are scarcely known to students of English today.

JOHN ATKINSON

Stepness, Lincolnshire

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number.

(Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

مكفا من الأصل

## analysis

# Burying the Crusader's sword

Nine hundred years after a Pope denounced Muslims as a 'vile race', a leading Western newspaper talks of an 'Islamist gangrene'. The language of hatred is frightening European leaders and hindering peace, says Robert Fisk

A few months ago, the telephone rang in my Beirut apartment and a shy, academic voice asked if he could present me with a document. Dr Georges Jabbour turned out to be a Syrian who worked in the office of his prime minister but whose personal mission had nothing to do with his government. The document he gave me was addressed to Pope John Paul II and it asked, with great courtesy and without resentment, if - on the 900th anniversary of Pope Urban II's appeal for a holy war against Muslims - His Holiness would like to apologise for the Crusades.

Most of the European Kingdoms and Empires participated in the Crusader wars against Arabs and Muslims, Dr Jabbour noted. Could not Pope John Paul say something that was 'close to an apology to the descendants of those who were the victims of the implementation of those decisions [for a Crusade]?'

The 900 years of blood and fire that Europe was to unleash on the Middle East - in which both Muslims and Jews were massacred by the Crusaders, some of whom indulged in cannibalism - had been preceded by Pope Urban's chilling condemnation of Muslims as 'an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God'. It was a holy act, he said, to 'exterminate this vile race from our [sic] lands'.

Dr Jabbour's letter 900 years later hopefully predicted that an apology from the modern-day Pope would 'assuage and bring peace to the Islamic world as a whole'.

I was reminded of my unexpected Syrian visitor this week by something familiar in the rhetoric that the West is now using against its real or supposed enemies in the Middle East - and by the very real danger that this language represents for Europe. 'Islamic terror' is now a password for anger and hatred on American television and in the American

and Israeli press, an insidious punctuation mark that pays no attention to religion or history, and often little attention to proof. At Sharm el-Sheikh and again this week, President Clinton - supported by world leaders - appears to have launched a modern-day Crusade that goes far beyond the outrage that any sane person must feel towards the acts of criminal violence now afflicting the United States.

Of course, when suicide bombers or gunmen - in Israel or in the West - boast that they murder civilians in the name of Islam, it is understandable that many millions of Israelis and Westerners will believe that.

The language of hatred - of 'terror' and of 'sloshing' maniacs - cannot be dismissed as journalistic. Imagine, for instance, the disgust we would feel - rightly - if the massacre of 29 Palestinians by an Israeli settler in Hebron had been followed by an article in *Le Monde* entitled 'Jewish gangrene'; in fact, Baruch Goldstein's bloodbath was never even called an act of 'terror' - because that is not quite the 'terror' against which Americans and Europeans are being asked to campaign.

Violent language, however, is becoming endemic throughout the West and there are signs that it is beginning to frighten some European governments. At least one European foreign minister has felt obliged to warn his colleagues that injustice rather than 'fanaticism' breeds 'terrorism' and that name-calling deliberately serves to hide the nature of that injustice. For as the American-Israeli 'peace process' finally crumbles to dust in the aftermath of the Likud election victory, the last thing Europe needs now is to pursue an American-Israeli crusade against something called 'Islamic terror' - and for one simple, overriding reason. America has identified national interests in the Middle East. Cynics might sum them up as Israel and oil, though not necessarily in that order. Europe also has interests but we have something infinitely more important. The nations of the Middle East are our neighbours. They will never be neighbours of America. They will always be neighbours of ours.

It is this realisation that lies at the heart of a slow but growing European re-engagement with the Middle East, one that is not opposed to America but which may well infuriate Americans and some - though not all - Israelis. The process was marked by last year's European refusal to join President Clinton's embargo against Iran, an embargo which he announced at a Jewish meeting in New York, but which was immediately rejected by the European powers whose policy of 'dialogue' rather than confrontation has now become de facto EU policy. A similar practice - which in no way expresses approval of the dictatorships involved - applies to Syria, against whom some American commentators are now advising pre-emptive military strikes (by Israel, of course, rather than by the United States).

Last April, although initially criticised by EU officials, the French foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, flew to the Middle East during Israel's bombardment of southern Lebanon, expressing to Israel the anger of President Chirac - who had just paid a state visit to Lebanon - and eventually playing a leading role in a ceasefire between the

Israelis and the Hezbollah. It was De Charette who personally visited the scene of Israel's massacre at Qana. And as a reward for his later peacemaking, France is now to sit on the - admittedly rather impotent - five-power ceasefire committee. And then in early July, Germany - whose 'dialogue' with Iran has proved the closest and most economically advantageous of all European states - was able to mediate between the Iranians, Syrians and Israelis to secure the exchange of bodies and prisoners of both sides in the south Lebanon war.

There are other signs of European impatience with America's policy in the Middle East; its growing awareness that America's uncritical support for Israel is alienating ever more millions of Arabs has led to pointed remarks from both Britain and France for the need to follow signed peace agreements between the Palestinians and Israel. France has now objected to America's campaign to prevent Boutros Ghali - an Egyptian Christian - seeking UN re-election. And it should not be forgotten that it was Europe which accepted long before the Americans and Israelis that the PLO should be involved in peace negotiations. At a time when President Jimmy Carter

was forced to rid himself of a UN ambassador who had privately met with a PLO adviser, British and other European ambassadors around the Middle East were meeting publicly with Yasir Arafat's senior officials. Indeed, the 1980 Venice declaration specifically stated that the PLO - still 'internation-

alised territory. In the same year, EC declarations in Copenhagen and Bonn supported George Schultz's peace initiatives but deplored what they referred to as Israel's 'repressive measures ... which are in violation of international law and human rights'. Most important of all, the EU has remained steadfast in its belief that UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 - the end of Israeli occupation in return for the security of all Middle East states, the very formula now rejected by the Israelis - must remain the unalterable bedrock of peace in the region.

But there is another element of US foreign policy in the Middle East that can also prove perilous to its allies, not only to those nations such as Egypt which are now locked into a straitjacket of loyalty on pain of losing the massive US subsidies that save it from bankruptcy, but to Israel itself. Ever since the foundation of their state, Israelis have been concerned - and rightly so - at the extent of their own dependency on the United States. Israeli politicians of left and right have noted the degree to which Israel must rely upon the US not just for its military and political protection but for its financial solvency. And many Israelis suspect that this rela-

tional terrorists", according to Israel and America - should be 'associated' with peace negotiations. When European foreign ministers met in Paris just under four years later, they reiterated the terms of the Venice agreement, adding their support to what they called the 'right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with all that this implies.' In Brussels in 1987, Community foreign ministers were demanding an improvement of living conditions for Palestinians in occupied

territory. In the same year, EC declarations in Copenhagen and Bonn supported George Schultz's peace initiatives but deplored what they referred to as Israel's 'repressive measures ... which are in violation of international law and human rights'. Most important of all, the EU has remained steadfast in its belief that UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 - the end of Israeli occupation in return for the security of all Middle East states, the very formula now rejected by the Israelis - must remain the unalterable bedrock of peace in the region.

And yet in many parts of the Middle East, Europe is still seen as an enlightened international community whose friendship will last longer than that of the US. Something of this idea lay behind the Barcelona conference last year, when both Arabs and Israelis came together in a relationship based upon partnership rather than dependence. And an EU policy of complimentarity - of standing by the original terms of a Middle East peace, rather than secret peace deals with no international guarantees - may even produce some form of safety net when the elaborate construction of the 'peace process' turns out to be as ill-fabricated and unsafe as most Arabs - and many Israelis - now suspect. But that same Europe cannot afford to maintain these relationships while going to war with 'Islamic terror'. For Islam - alongside Christianity and Judaism - is the religion of our neighbours from southern Russia to Turkey to Bosnia to Morocco.

Dr Jabbour never received his apology from the Pope. But at least he should feel confident that there will be no more Crusades.

The Crusader as Christian hero: a popular 19th century Spanish print. The nations of the Middle East will always be our neighbours: should Europeans pursue an American-Israeli crusade against something called the 'Islamic terror'? Photograph: Mary Evans Picture Library



## The association of religion and violence has now reached racist proportions

'Islamic terror' is their enemy. That is what the bombers want them to believe. Oddly enough, the Serbs who massacred and raped their way through the Muslims of Bosnia were never described as servants of 'Christianity' or 'fanaticism' breeds 'terrorism' and that name-calling deliberately serves to hide the nature of that injustice. For as the American-Israeli 'peace process' finally crumbles to dust in the aftermath of the Likud election victory, the last thing Europe needs now is to pursue an American-Israeli crusade against something called 'Islamic terror' - and for one simple, overriding reason. America has identified national interests in the Middle East. Cynics might sum them up as Israel and oil, though not necessarily in that order. Europe also has interests but we have something infinitely more important. The nations of the Middle East are our neighbours. They will never be neighbours of America. They will always be neighbours of ours.

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## In many parts of the Middle East Europe is still seen as an enlightened community

on the premises, which I take to mean in the purloined of this column, and I intend to start as soon as possible before complications set in. The system will be very simple. Interested parties will send me their details and a large cheque.

The clergyman, or registrar, or whoever is chosen to conduct the ceremony will send both of them the questions they would normally be asked in a 'live' wedding. They will send back the answers, which for the most part are simple ones like 'Yes' or 'No', or 'I do'.

This will then be printed in this column, together with a best man's speech, etc, etc, and the happy couple will be married. By economising on space and using small print, etc, etc, I calculate that we can fit up to three weddings into one column.

Meanwhile, if you're young and affianced and looking for a novel kind of wedding, something quite out of the ordinary, I'm ready and waiting. Let's see the colour of your money!

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## This column proposes to marry you...

I have an important and joyous announcement to make today. This column has now been licensed for the solemnisation of weddings!

Yes, from today onwards, you will be able to get married in this very space to the man or woman of your choice, or to anyone else if the man or woman of your choice is already married to someone else!

As you know, the most unlikely places can now be licensed for the enactment of the marriage service. Hotels have been used. Theatres are being used. Opera houses, Pullman railway cars, snooker halls, even churches.

Of course, none of this is totally new, as the Americans have been getting married in the oddest places for scores of years. Americans have been married underwater, married falling from aeroplanes with parachutes, married nude, married on horseback...

There was even a report the other day that a pair had been married on the Internet.

Now, I am not one of those

who look down on the Internet. Yes, for a long time I did make this column was one of those new railway companies which the Government is paying to destroy our rail system. No, I am not actually plugged into the Internet myself. But, yes, I can see that there are vast sums of money to be made from the Internet, so I am not likely to seize at it. And I thought to myself: If people can get married on the Internet, why not on the Internet?

The man who hands out licences for these things thought the same way.

'Why not indeed?' he said.

Admittedly, I may not have explained exactly the circumstances under which I intend to conduct services. He may have been left with the impression that the weddings I shall be arranging will take place in the small chapel on the 15th floor of the *Independent* building. They will not be taking place there. There is, to be frank, no chapel on the 15th floor, and heaven knows what, and I think if I told him that a newspaper column has none of these things, he might have taken a melancholy turn.

As it is, I have a licence to allow marriages to take place

on the premises, which I take to mean in the purloined of this column, and I intend to start as soon as possible before complications set in.

The system will be very simple.

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By economising on space and using small print, etc, etc, I calculate that we can fit up to three weddings into one column.

Of course, if anyone knows of any just cause or impediment why the marriage should not take place, he or she should let me know well

before the event, and for a mutually agreed sum I will insert his or her objections into the service.

The person being joined in matrimony must also agree not to indulge in any activity that might reflect badly on the marriage, such as appearing on *Blind Date* or going on the front of *Hello!* magazine, or indeed the inside of *Hello!* magazine.

There will, necessarily, be no videotaped record of the wedding, but the happy couple may buy an engraved and framed copy of this column on the day they were married in it for a very reasonable £110.

This column cannot cope with staging the reception as well, but I believe that our fellow publication, *Section Two*, is setting up the facilities for this. Please contact them for details.

Meanwhile, if you're young and affianced and looking for a novel kind of wedding, something quite out of the ordinary, I'm ready and waiting. Let's see the colour of your money!



**Miles Kington**

call meetings and pass motions of confidence in the management, or, sometimes, the opposite.

But the man who hands out licences to print wedding certificates might not have given me a licence if he had known I proposed to do it all through the printed page. He was very insistent on asking me if there were adequate toilet facilities, and sufficient fire exits, and health care, and counselling, and heaven knows what, and I think if I told him that a newspaper column has none of these things, he might have taken a melancholy turn.

As it is, I have a licence to allow marriages to take place

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## the commentators

Giles Radice's report on the Scott inquiry finds a system of ministerial unaccountability supported by supine MPs on both sides

For more than three years the dark shadow of Sir Richard Scott's arms-to-Iraq inquiry loomed ominously over the Major administration. At times the effort of rebutting Sir Richard's most menacing accusations paralysed the government machine. For weeks before its publication in February, the inquiry utterly consumed what one of its potential victims, William Waldegrave, once aptly called the "media-political complex".

Six months later, it is not easy to remember what all the fuss was about. Partly, of course, it is our fault. There was high-grade parliamentary theatre, but no resignations, despite the devastating eloquence of Robin Cook in the Commons, and we rather lost the governing classes that they absorbed with such efficiency the shock of Sir Richard's complaints that Parliament was not given the truth by ministers about the waiving of export guidelines in the sale of equipment to Saddam Hussein. The dogs barked, then the caravan moved on.

Since then, the wheels of government have ground exceeding slow and small. No minister resigned. No civil servant criticised in the report has been disciplined. Instead, this week, with MPs safely on holiday, we see the first, falteringly, official response. It is a splendidly innocuous and bureaucratic DTI consultation paper answering Sir Richard's demand for a comprehensive review of government export controls. No firm proposals are made, and we are

assured, just in case there was any fear that ministers might do something hasty, that when the consultation period is over, there may be further "detailed consultation ... as proposals for change are worked up in detail". In other words, don't expect anything this side of an election.

In sharp contrast, the Commons public services select committee, chaired by the Labour MP Giles Radice, in a report this week at least attempted to grapple with the most far-reaching questions raised by Scott: what are the limits of ministerial responsibility, and how to hold the executive to account? In particular, it seeks to update the doctrine unambiguously set out by Gladstone in 1879: "In every free state, for every public act, someone must be responsible; and the question is, who shall it be? The British constitution answers: 'The minister and the minister exclusively'."

It is a commonplace among most modern politicians that this no longer works quite literally. In today's system of government, after all, a minister simply can't know everything that goes on in his department. And that was part of the ministers' defence in the case of arms to Iraq: they didn't tell Parliament the truth because they didn't always



DONALD MACINTYRE

know what their civil servants were doing. But this leaves an accountability black hole, lucidly identified by the Radice report: "If when things go wrong, it is held that ministers are not to blame because they did not (knowingly) mislead Parliament and civil servants are not to blame because they acted as servants of ministers, then the unsatisfactory outcome is that nobody is to blame."

The inescapable subtext of the Radice report is that MPs have been almost wilfully supine in dealing with this problem. Scott accepted that ministers couldn't be held responsible for matters they knew nothing about; but added that the quid pro quo was that they had to disclose fully the information that

Parliament needs to decide who was responsible. And this, of course, ministers are unwilling to do, especially if full disclosure would suggest that they are not quite as blameless as they claim. Which makes the idea that the executive's fully accountable to Parliament one of the bigger lies at the heart of our political system.

The Radice committee has at least tried to pose the question of how to change that within the British constitution. Here, unlike the United States, there is no clear separation between the executive and the legislature, and the government has a built-in parliamentary majority.

Potentially, as the report recognises, the sharpest instruments for holding the executive to account are select committees. But the committees are themselves closely under the patronage of party managers. It is not just that the governing party has a majority on all the most important ones; it is also that the whips have the most influence in determining who sits on them. The history of the select committees is littered with examples of government obstruction.

Take as a recent example the trade and industry committee's investigation into whether Jonathan

Aitken, the Tory MP and BMARC director, knew whether the company was selling naval cannon to Iran. The committee was denied access to classified intelligence documents. It remarked in this in its final report, but it didn't bother to complain publicly at the time, when it might have made a difference. It found no evidence against Mr Aitken.

Nor should one assume that Labour-dominated committees would behave any differently. Indeed, any temptation among Labour MPs to agitate for reform now is bound to be tempered by the prospect of a Blair government. The truth is that Parliament as a watchdog has been muzzled by a conspiracy between ministers and wannabe ministers, which together means the large majority of MPs on both sides of the House. Mr Radice's committee makes some limited but sensible suggestions, including greater powers for select committees. But will they happen? Backbench MPs collectively, and across party boundaries, have proven themselves jolly good at mass revolts over their own pay packets. They have shown precious little desire to act in the same way to strengthen their powers over the executive.

Unless MPs, like the movers and shakers on US Congressional committees, start to regard a back-bench career as at least as worthwhile as that of the junior minister for paper clips and widgets, that is unlikely to change. And until it does, the modern answer to Gladstone's question of 1879 will continue to be a resounding: "Not me, Guv."

## This time the mob has right on its side

Politicians often rise above the clamour from the streets but on gun control the mass instinct is sound and six Tories have got it sadly wrong

**T**here are mobs and there are majorities. A majority is a large group of people with a vaguely, passionately held opinion. A mob is a large group of people with a furiously, actively embraced idea. Thus there is a majority who, if asked, will say they are in favour of hanging – this is not, for the moment, on the mob's agenda. But there is a mob who, after Dunblane and with-



BRYAN APPLEYARD

out being asked, want to see handguns banned. In these cases, the majority is wrong and the mob right.

Good policies frequently must be anti-democratic. Both mobs and majorities must often be resisted. If, for example, hanging became a mob issue, then politicians should resist because capital punishment is morally wrong, brutalises entire societies and never works as a deterrent. This may be paternalistic, but it would be right because sometimes politicians really do know better than the electorate what is good for them.

On the other hand, democracy, crudely understood, implies that the mob or the majority must always be right. The people are, after all, the only

The rabble could not have a more legitimate target than loonies who play with guns

has divided along strictly party lines. This, as John Major has said, is not a party issue. Yet the Tories have all voted against a ban, against a mob that plainly has right on its side.

I would guess that a number of factors are at work here.

First, the Tories may have calculated that this will all blow over, so why bother with legislation that will be messy and inspire small but vociferous pockets of resistance?

Second, the police have apparently mur-

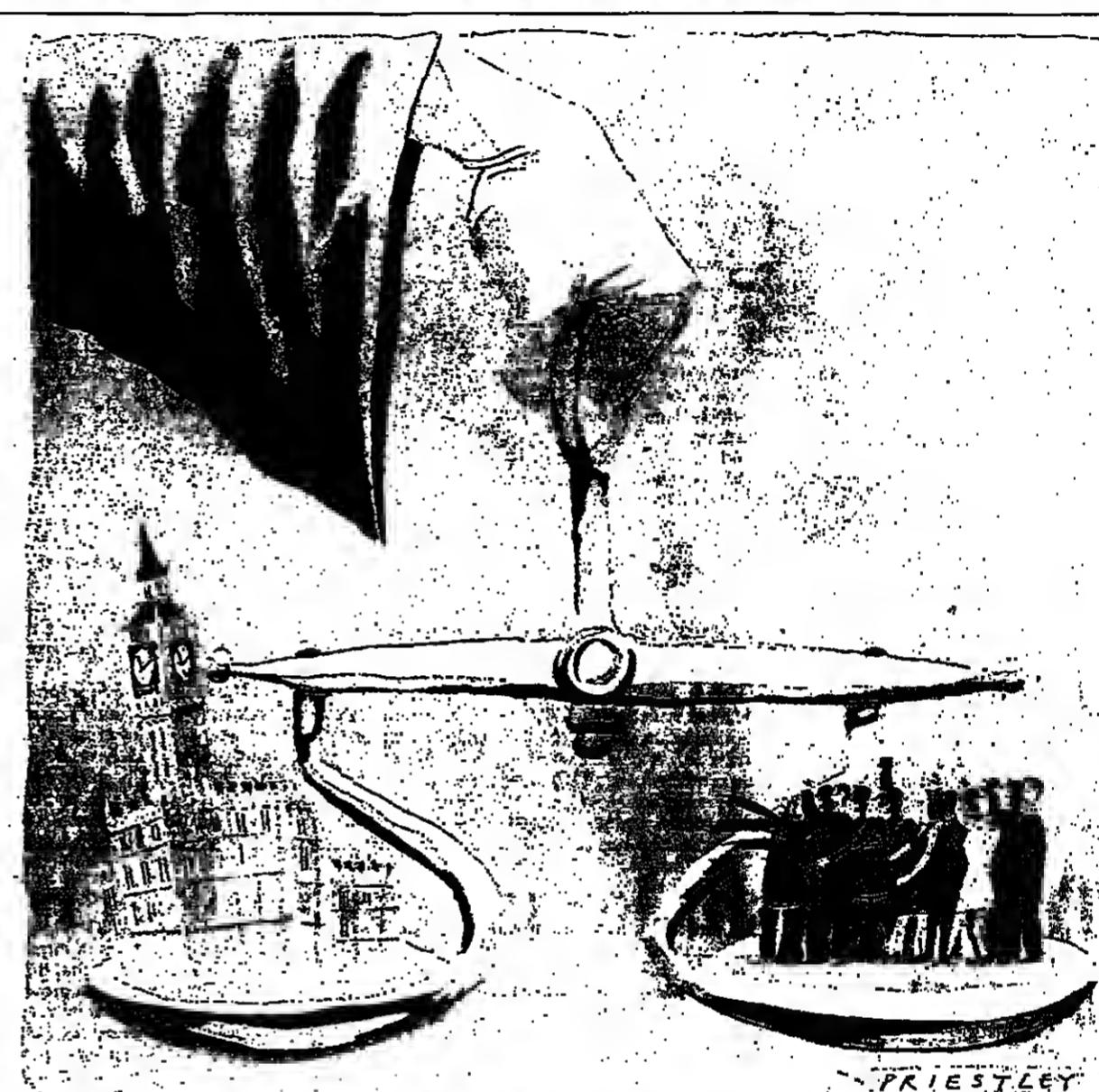
mured something about the impracticality of a ban – and "impractical" is always a word that gives committees the chance to creep softly and silently away. Third, there may well be a feeling among the Tories that the liberties of gen-

uine sporting gun users should not be infringed – an arguable point, but not one that, of itself, justifies the private ownership of the kind of weapons employed by Thomas Hamilton. These were killing, not sporting machines.

But all of that is fairly feeble stuff, and does not explain the neatness of the party split. The odd Labour member could equally well have bought these arguments without too much ideological soul-searching. But none did.

That brings me to the fourth possibility: that there is some concealed Republicanism in the Tory ranks. Not Republicanism of the anti-monarchy variety, but Republicanism of the American variety. Republicans in the US do not want to do anything about the carnage directly caused by their insanely liberal gun laws. The vile National Rifle Association, brandishing an irrelevant clause in the constitution, has far too much power. Its argument is that the right to bear arms is a fundamental aspect of a free society. Absurd as this is – why not the right to deal drugs, or own domestic nuclear devices? – it carries huge rhetorical weight in a country still devoted to its frontier fantasies. Otherwise intelligent politicians mouth fabulous sophistries about people, not guns, causing crimes and therefore it is irrelevant to control guns.

As I have said in this column before, this argument is absurd because a gun might well make a crime possible and, therefore, "cause" it; and, in any case,



PRIESTLEY

society must have a reasonable interest in limiting the amount of damage that criminals can do. It also has an interest in stopping the maiming and killing of thousands of children a year in domestic handgun accidents.

But you can see the attraction of the libertarian argument to a certain kind of bone-headed right-winger. It offers a nice combination of moral muscularity and simple sadism. Don't do anything that might remotely infringe a supposed liberty because it's people that cause crime, not guns. But mean-

while, you can have as much fun as you like locking up more and more criminals. Tough on crime, but actually rather nice to the causes of crime.

Michael Howard provides further evidence of this ideological inclination. He goes along with the mob when it comes to keeping people in prison and fighting off more literally inclined judges. But his party shows no sign of buying the mob line on guns. One malign contradiction of American Republicanism has been inserted into British politics.

If this really is happening

within the Tory party, then they are in an even worse state than I thought. They are drifting towards a corporatist and anti-social form of politics which is, in fact, the opposite of traditional, socially sensitive British conservatism. If the party as a whole goes along with these six pro-gun MPs, then it will also be dis-

playing a disastrous failure of political imagination. For, in the case of gun control, it could be in a no-win situation. The mob wants to ban handguns and the mob is right. The Tories could keep their votes and their consciences intact. What more could they want? Blood? No, silly me, they've already got that.

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### THURSDAY DIARY

## John Walsh

Try to imagine Imran Khan stopping mid run-up and mouthing "forget it" at the umpire

Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions Dept. JK Galbraith, the legendary Canadian economist, breezed into town the other day and took tea at the Ritz with his publishers, Sinclair-Stevenson. Now 88, the elongated sage with the sweet tooth (his luxury choice on *Desert Island Discs*) was a supply of maple syrup from his

Vermont farm) held forth about single currencies and President Clinton and so forth and, as he prepared to leave, was approached by a fan.

"Professor Galbraith," he breathed, "such an admirer... great honour... would you mind... my wife, you know?"

The Professor signed his autograph with a flourish. But the chap needed something more, to tell his chums at the Ritz Club.

"Tell me, Professor," he asked, "how can we bring down interest rates?"

Galbraith looked at him.

"We can start," he said gravely,

"by spending less money at the Ritz."

Lovers of all things Caribbean, from flying fish *escovitch* to laughably corrupt politics, should tune in to Radio 5 Live for the first of four investigations into the islands' politico-economic affairs. They're produced by Marina Salandy-Brown, the Trinidadian fireball who used to

host *McVey Bragg's Start the Week* radio show, but behind the programmes' smooth, rippling, azure-blue etc surface, there lurks a tale of Homeric misfortune.

Ms Salandy Brown flew to the Caribbean Sea in April with her work cut out: she had arranged to interview half a dozen heads of state on 12 islands, helped by the entrepreneurial skills of a local fixer called Jeremy, who was to present the programmes: the two broadcasters faced the ordeal of a 2,000-mile round trip on a tiny BBC budget.

Things began to go wrong shortly after Ms Salandy-Brown touched down in Port of Spain. First she realised she had left behind her jet bracelet traditionally worn in the islands to ward off the evil eye. Bad mistake. Her helmsman/presenter Jeremy began to complain of pains in his bones; by the first day of recording, he'd gone down with dengue fever and been ordered to bed for three weeks – the entire duration of the assignment. Then Salandy-Brown discovered that being a female media hustler in the Caribbean carries little clout, as the political bigwigs began to pull out of their promised interviews.

Stranded far from home, with her presenter comatose, she faced the prospect of having to fill four pre-booked programmes with nothing more than recordings of the locals singing *De Big Bamboo*. She was in despair. What was a girl to do?

She found a bar and told her sad tale to a sympathetic local who thought he might be able to help: he was called Jones P. Madeira. Oh please,

Marina Salandy-Brown saved by the man in the bar

(Perhaps from an impulse of gratitude, the people had also dressed Jones P. the best-dressed man in Trinidad.)

At his approach, heads of state fawned and genuflected. Recalcitrant politicians came over all loquacious in his company. With Mr Madeira by her side, Salandy-Brown found herself being offered cocktails under ambassadorial banyan trees and shown round the local parliament offices. The programme was saved. It was, she said, like hanging out with Nelson Mandela ...

Sweet story. Happy ending. When you listen to her on Radio 5 Live you may notice the sound of someone who can't believe her luck.



Heavy man ... an Olympic competitor comes down to earth

# Stagecoach in £475m rail takeover

Porterbrook rolling stock purchase raises fears of threat to competition

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR and MICHAEL HARRISON

A handful of rail executives were turned into multi-millionaires yesterday as Stagecoach, the aggressive bus and rail group, unveiled a £475m takeover of the rolling stock leasing company Porterbrook.

But the deal provoked immediate criticism and a full-

The consolidation of the bus industry into three large groupings continued yesterday with the acquisition of North East Bus by the Cowie Group. The three groups - Cowie, Stagecoach and Firstbus - now have a 55 per cent share of the UK bus market.

Cowie, the car sales, bus and finance group, based in Sunderland, paid £24.5m to National Express group for the bus company. North East Bus has annual sales of almost £29m and runs services in County Durham and Teesside in North-east England, where Cowie already owns Northumbria Buses and Yorkshire Bus. North East Bus made a profit of £3m last year and owns 422 buses and has nearly 1,200 employees.

scale regulatory investigation was launched, if the deal is allowed through it would fundamentally change the structure of the privatised railway industry. Porterbrook was bought off the Government in January by a management-led buyout for £52m. The effective price paid yesterday by Stagecoach, including debt, is £825m.

The 20 per cent stake held by the management of Porterbrook, led by managing director Sandy Anderson, is worth £92.5m on the basis of the Stagecoach bid. At the time of privatisation

just seven months ago it was valued at £15m although the Porterbrook chief and the remaining 49 staff are thought to have paid only a fraction of that amount for their shares.

Stagecoach, which already owns the South West Trains franchise and is bidding for the 12 remaining passenger franchises being auctioned off immediately offered undertakings to safeguard competition in a bid to prevent the deal being referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

It also said it would be placing an order for £90m for new rolling stock for South West Trains. Previously, the company had said that no new trains were needed for the seven year term of the franchise which started last February.

The carefully constructed edifice of rail privatisation developed over the past three years by the Government has been put in jeopardy by the proposed deal. Labour's new shadow transport secretary, Andrew Smith, immediately raised questions about the merger. He said: "It is a matter of concern that Stagecoach is now in a position from which it might be able to inhibit competitors. Any potential bidders for the remaining franchises will need to look carefully at the implications of this deal where rail companies will be forced to lease rolling stock from their competitors."

The move by Stagecoach to pursue vertical integration poses a series of questions for the rail regulator. John Swift, and the Office of Fair Trading to consider, Mr Swift issued a 22 paragraph consultation paper on the proposed deal, giving respondents three weeks to send in their views. He has asked, in particular, for views on the



Full steam ahead: Brian Souter, chairman of Stagecoach, may, however, be required to slam on the brakes concerning further rolling stock acquisition

effect of the merger on investment in new rolling stock and on competition in the market for rolling stock and in the provision of passenger services.

He will report to the Office of Fair Trading which, in turn, will advise the DTI. Mr Swift's position is complicated by the limits of his power. While contracts between Railtrack and

the train operating companies, the rolling stock companies such as Porterbrook are exempt from his scrutiny.

The ramifications for the rail industry are very uncertain and are worrying many of the private companies which have entered the market since privatisation began in earnest a year ago. The inter-relationship between the

different players in the rail industry are already complex and if one company is vertically integrated, others fear it will be in a position to outbid rivals in the franchising process.

Aware of these fears, Stagecoach's statement yesterday said that the terms offered by Porterbrook to any train operating company "will not unfairly discriminate" compared with companies controlled by Stagecoach.

However, such promises met with derision among some of the other players in the rail industry. One senior source said: "If anyone thinks that Porterbrook will be offering the same deal to other bidders for train companies as they will to Stagecoach, they are living in cloud-

cuckoo land. There isn't the faintest chance of that happening. This is a red-tooth-and-claw environment."

While Stagecoach won the first franchise, South West Trains, it has been in the bidding for all eight so far allocated and has promised to bid for all the remainder of the 25.

Comment, page 19

Toyota warns Tories on Europe

MICHAEL HARRISON

The Japanese car manufacturer Toyota, one of the biggest overseas investors in Britain, yesterday warned the Government about the dangers of becoming more detached from Europe and of turning its back on a single currency.

Toyota has spent more than £1bn on its UK car and engine plants. A senior executive of the company also indicated that Toyota's attitude towards investing in Britain, would not be altered by the appearance of a Labour government.

Iwao Okijima, an executive vice-president of Toyota, said: "I sincerely hope Britain will not become semi-detached from Europe or a single currency, because we are here not just to serve the UK market but the whole of Europe."

Mr Okijima added that if a single currency was adopted, it would be "incredibly beneficial" to manufacturers in Britain. He also said there seemed to be a very slim gap between the policies of the two main parties and that whichever party won the next election, it would probably pursue "moderate policies".

His comments appear to undermine the claims last month from Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, that large numbers of inward investors would be deterred from coming to Britain in the event of a Labour victory.

Capacity at Toyota's Burnaston plant in Derbyshire is set to rise to 200,000 by the end of 1998, when production of a second model, the Corolla, begins alongside the existing Corolla E. The car plant and the engine factory on Deeside, north Wales will, by then, be employing 3,000 people. Mr Okijima said that this year just over a quarter of the 400,000 cars it expects to sell in Europe will be built in the UK. In two years' time it hopes to be selling 500,000 cars of which 40 per cent would be built in the UK.

He said that the advantages of being able to deal in a single currency would be substantial and that most entrepreneurs would be against Britain moving away from Europe or opposing monetary union.

The Government is still under intense pressure from Conservative right-wingers to rule out participation in a single currency in the lifetime of the next Parliament. The CBI, however, has said it will not support a manifesto that rules out the option of joining a single currency after the election.

## Telewest shake-up prompts chief executive's departure



Alan Michels: Could pocket £1m in lieu of notice

MATHEW HORSMAN

Media Editor

The chief executive of the country's largest cable company is to leave with immediate effect, it emerged last night, in the wake of the latest management shake-up in the struggling UK cable sector.

The departure of Alan Michels, head of Telewest Communications, follows a board meeting yesterday to discuss management restructuring and future strategy. Mr Michels, who could pocket £1m of com-

pensation, is expected to be replaced by Stephen Davidson, currently finance director, who would become the first British executive to head up one of the top UK cable operators. Mr Davidson, a banker by training, has worked with large media clients, and was senior vice-president, corporate finance, at Lorimar, now a subsidiary of Time Warner.

The change marks the third time this year a large cable company has changed chief executives. Most recently, Dan Somers took over from Alan

Bates at Bell Cabledmedia, the third largest operator.

Industry sources said the changes reflected a desire to replace largely technical management with executives more attuned to marketing, in an effort to boost disappointingly low penetration rates, particularly for cable television.

Mr Michels, who joined Telewest from one of its parent companies, US West, in 1994, spent most of his career in financial analysis. Under his direction, the cable operator saw

telephony penetration rates im-

prove, although the cable television side performed far less well. He is to spend some time with his family, following his return to the US.

"I hope this means the end of a steady stream of Americans coming in to run cable companies for two-year stints," one Telewest insider said.

Another senior industry source added: "The company has been a bit of a shambles from a customer point of view."

But Mr Michels received sup-

port from some colleagues. One

said: "He has worked bloody

hard in a very difficult industry."

Mr Michels was on a three-year fixed contract worth £500,000 a year. He is expected to be paid £1m in lieu of a two-year notice period. His remuneration had included an amount to cover tax liabilities as well as a housing allowance worth £63,000 a year.

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## Salvesen open to higher offer

NIGEL COPE

Christian Salvesen rejected the proposed £1bn offer from Hays, the rival transport group, yesterday describing it as "inadequate", though it left the door open for a "significantly" improved approach.

At a crunch board meeting in London, which included two members of the controlling Salvesen family, the directors voted unanimously to reject

the 370p-a-share offer following advice from their advisers, SBC Warburg.

In a letter to Hays, Christian Salvesen said: "You have indicated in both your letters that you may be prepared to improve your terms. The board would consider a significantly improved financial proposal should you wish to make one to it."

Salvesen chief executive Chris Masters stressed that the board was "in no way solicit-

ing an offer". He repeated his view that he did not consider the industrial logic of the deal compelling and that it did not reflect the value of the company.

He said it was "considering" its position but it seems unlikely that the company would give up after the first attempt. One institutional investor described the 370p offer as "just a sighting shot". Ronnie Frost, chairman of Hays, has not ruled out going hostile but would prefer

to reach an agreed deal as the Salvesen family controls 38 per cent of the shares. Some family members have expressed interest in an improved deal and this may give Hays hope that it can get some of the family on its side.

However, it is unclear how much higher Hays can afford to go. An offer above 400p is considered unlikely. Christian Salvesen shares fell 4p to 356p with Hays unchanged at 429p.

## Rebuffed names plan to fight on in court

PETER RODGERS

Financial Editor

A last-ditch attempt to avert a judicial review of the Lloyd's £3.2bn rescue plan failed yesterday when rebel names were rebuffed at a meeting with the market authorities. The Paying Names Action Group met Lloyd's officials and the market's legal adviser Barry O'Brien, a senior partner at Freshfields.

The names asked for extra help for those who had paid their debts in full, who do not benefit as much from the rescue, on which they have to vote by 28 August.

Lloyd's also announced that it had won a case establishing that it had the right to receive cash won by names litigating against the market. It also named the trustees for Equitas, the reinsurance vehicle for the rescue and announced plans for

new Scottish limited partnerships which will allow names to continue in the market but with limited liability.

Lloyd's case against attempts to overturn its £3.2bn settlement offer had been reviewed by the three QCs, by solicitors Slaughter and May and by the Department of Trade and Industry and its lawyers and the result had been a "fair old choir of QCs singing to the same tune", Mr O'Brien said. A spokesman reiterated that no more could be done to change the offer.

The meeting came as Lloyd's mailed formal offers to 34,000 members detailing the effect on them of the rescue, on which they have to vote by 28 August.

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## COMMENT

In some respects Stagecoach's Brian Souter has got to be admired for exposing the contradictions in the sell-off by seeking to add a rolling stock company to the passenger franchises he already has and hopes still to get.

## The rail sell-off comes to a head-on crash

The head-on collision that many predicted would be the inevitable consequence of rail privatisation has occurred even more rapidly than expected. Unsurprisingly, the City is delighted with the latest outing of the Stagecoach Pullman. But its £825m acquisition of the train leasing business Porterbrook has derailed the regulators and Transport Secretary Sir George Young looking like the booking clerk who issued a Super Saver before 9.30 in the morning.

In some respects Stagecoach's Brian Souter has got to be admired for exposing the contradictions in the rail sell-off by seeking to add a rolling stock company to the passenger franchises he already has and hopes still to get. Whether admiration is the sensation coursing through Whitehall is less certain.

If rail privatisation was about anything it was about introducing competition. To some people, splitting BR up into 57 different varieties looked barmy but we were reassured that it would expose inefficiencies and force the component parts to deal more competitively with one another. We were also assured that rail privatisation would not be another gravy train for bloated executives. With one move Mr Souter has driven well, a stagecoach through the Government's best intentions. The vertical integration that would result from the Stagecoach-Porterbrook deal strikes at the heart of the new structure put in place through privatisation. The overnight windfalls that have dropped in the laps of the Porterbrook management

put even the corporate excesses of the regional electricity companies in the shade.

The idea that any of those Porterbrook executives who mortgaged their houses to jump on board are now being rewarded for their risk taking is also fanciful. Inheriting a business where 80 per cent of the revenues are guaranteed for eight years is the kind of risk we would all love to take.

The Office of Passenger Rail Franchising and the rail regulator John Swift are not surprisingly building up a fair old head of steam about the way the bidding system for the remaining 12 franchises could be compromised. It is easy to see why if Stagecoach can, on the one hand, set the price for leasing out the rolling stock and on the other determine what it is worth bidding for in subsidies.

Mr Souter has already thought of that and is attempting to avoid being shunted off to the MMC with a series of undertakings. How easily they could be policed is another matter. A more effective safeguard might be to bar Stagecoach from bidding for any more rail franchises.

## Cable has got itself in a twist

It's "all change" at the major cable companies, as yet another chief executive, this time Alain Michels of Telewest, gets the chop. What on earth is going on? The quick answer is that cable is in woeful shape: its pen-

etration rates are stuck in the mid 20 per cent range, its range of programming is either dire or bought in from market leader BSkyB, and its marketing and after-sales service record is, in a word, lousy. Some of this must be put down to the leadership or lack of it. In the main, the (mostly) American executives parachuted in to run the cable industry here have been telecoms men, and technical types - better at digging up roads, laying cable and establishing switching networks than at selling CATV and telephone services to a consumer market they barely understand.

The new man at Bell Cablemedia, Dan Somers, puts customers front and centre in his new strategy. Likewise, Stephen Davidson, who is to take over from Mr Michels at Telewest, is a man who talks marketing, even if he, like the man he replaces, is a finance type, not strictly a salesman.

But with a new man at the top, at least Telewest can now get on with the task of making cable profitable in the UK. Once the networks are fully built out, and the information highway begins to develop more quickly in the cable industry ought to benefit, even if heads roll in the meantime.

## Troubled times for Euro-Sids

British Sid is out alone. His more sophisticated neighbours who invested in specialised investment trusts buying Euro-

pean privatisation stocks have also done badly, ending up with holdings which nobody wants in a sector which looks to be going nowhere.

The managers of Kepit, Kleinwort Benson's European Privatisation Trust, recognised the game was up a couple of weeks ago, and their £500m fund launched in 1994 was dead in the water, trading at a 13.8 per cent discount to its net asset value. A reconstruction package to try and persuade Kepit's 79,000 shareholders to switch into other more dynamic Kleinwort funds has not proved particularly successful.

But the smell of blood in the water has attracted predators keen to liquidate Kepit and release the asset value. Yesterday Henderson Toochie Remnant's European Growth Trust (Treg) offered holders of Kepit shares and warrants a choice between an eventual cash exit which Treg values at 93.86p and 28.16p respectively, or a switch into Treg, which invests in European smaller companies, a sector which is still performing. Treg is valued at only £170m but it trades at or above its asset value.

Kepit shares rose 2p to 91.1p and Treg shed 3p to 244p, but if the offer succeeds the Kepit portfolio will be liquidated and parcellled out. After costs Kepit shareholders can expect cash or Treg shares worth 5.5 per cent and warrant-holders 10.4 per cent above Tuesday's market price. Treg shareholders will get a 2.4 per cent uplift to asset values, as well as lower costs and increased

marketability for their enlarged fund. A clean kill could also trigger more attacks in a sector ripe for rationalisation.

## More misery for the property have-nots

All the barometers of the housing market are pointing to an eventual recovery, yet yesterday's repossession figures show that unsettled conditions still prevail. Although the first half of this year did not bring the increase that many commentators had feared, there was barely any decline from the second half of last year. About 50,000 families a year are still losing their homes. Between 750,000 and a million home owners have properties worth less than the size of their mortgage.

The start of a recovery in house prices, which is clearly under way, was always expected to allow lenders to repossess more properties as it became worth selling them. So the absence of any clear downward trend in the figures is not a surprise. However, they do emphasise the most serious problem hanging over the housing market. That is the concentration of misery among certain groups of people.

The fact that the housing market recovery is greater for the upper sectors of the market and more prosperous areas is only increasing the divisions between the property market haves and have-nots.

# Royal quits high street and cuts 1,300 jobs

PETER RODGERS  
Financial Editor

Royal & Sun Alliance, the insurance group, is closing all but five of its 94 high-street branches as part of an efficiency drive that will cost 1,300 jobs. The branches have been made redundant by the shift in the insurance industry towards direct sales by telephone.

The reductions are the first in a programme expected to reduce the UK insurance workforce by 4,000 in the wake of the £5.4bn merger just completed.

John Robins of GRE: Signs a recovery in premiums

jobs. In a renewed efficiency programme, another 300 will go from its force of 6,000 UK staff. The company said it was not, however, planning involuntary redundancies.

Meanwhile, GRE expects to spend £500m (£320m) on one or more likely two - US acquisitions in the next six months, according to John Robins, the chief executive. The company has been in talks with several potential targets.

Mr Robins said: "I hope to have something in the next six months. We have turned down two to three that did not meet our criteria." GRE is looking for a specialist insurer of higher risk drivers to add to its existing subsidiary in the US, and an agency broker in property and casualty insurance. Mr Robins cheered the UK stock market by reporting signs of a rates recovery in premiums, especially in the motor market. "I don't believe there is going to be a price war in household rates," he said. Household premiums have fallen 8 per cent in a year.

Following the creation of Royal & Sun Alliance, GRE itself has become the target of widespread takeover speculation, but Mr Robins said: "I don't believe in that sort of merger. You have to be able to manage the inevitable culture clashes of two companies that have been building similar businesses over 150 years, at a time of considerable industry strain and change." There had been no bid discussions over GRE, he added.

Meanwhile, Nationwide has invested in annual £100m business in buildings and contents insurance from a group that included GRE, to a cheaper alternative from ITT London & Edinburgh.

Industry sources said that Guardian Royal Exchange, a rival company, is also likely to cut

## IN BRIEF

• Eurotunnel said the president of the Tribunal de Commerce in Paris had extended the mandate of debt mediators Lord Wakeham and Robert Badinter until 30 September. Eurotunnel's chairman, Sir Alastair Morton and Patrick Ponsolle, said in a statement: "The negotiations with the steering group representing the banking syndicate have not developed as quickly as we would have wished. We are convinced that the way is open to a fair agreement, but our shareholders should not underestimate the difficulty and complexity of the issues to be resolved in obtaining a detailed restructuring plan, acceptable to all parties."

• Nigel Rudd, chairman of the Pilkington glass company, warned shareholders at the annual meeting that difficult trading conditions in the European market would result in first-half profits showing a fall compared with the same period last year.

• Around 28,000 farmers will receive shares worth an average of £6,000 as a result of the stock market flotation of Dairy Crest, the former marketing arm of the Milk Marketing Board. Dairy Crest shares were priced at 155p yesterday, valuing the company at £1.71m. Dealings start on 28 August.

• Birmingham Midshires Building Society increased half-year profits before tax from £28.6m to £34.3m. The society said all the profits were in place for a sustained recovery.

• David Brown Group said chairman Sir Terence Harrison had relinquished his position on the board to concentrate on other business and private interests. Sir Taylor, a non-executive director for the past three years, will act as chairman pending a further appointment.

• Glaxo shrugged off a 16 per cent decline in first-half sales for its biggest selling drug, Zantac, more than making up for the short-term better-than-expected revenues from new drugs launched in the past five years. Interim profits were boosted by the injection of last year's £95m acquisition of Wellcome, rising from £1.16bn to £1.55bn.

# BAT INDUSTRIES

## Dividend up 8%

### First half unaudited results to 30 June 1996

PRE-TAX PROFIT	£1,331m	+12%
EARNINGS PER SHARE	26.0p	+12%
DIVIDEND PER SHARE	10.0p	+8%

- Pre-tax profit rose by 12 per cent to £1,331 million, an underlying 8 per cent, excluding the effect of disposals.
- Financial services profit increased by 3 per cent to £554 million, with a reduced profit of £225 million from the life and investment business, and the general business 8 per cent higher at £329 million.
- Tobacco trading profit was up by 7 per cent to £798 million, against last year's outstanding first half, even though there was a significant increase in brand development expenditure in a number of markets.
- BAT Industries is continuing to make good progress. The Board is declaring an interim dividend of 10.0p, an 8 per cent increase, as part of our long-term commitment to deliver superior total returns for shareholders.

Lord Cairns, Chairman

# business

## Glaxo finds new life after Zantac

Reports of the early demise of Glaxo Wellcome have clearly been exaggerated. There is life after Zantac with a healthy new drug pipeline making up for declining sales of the best-selling ulcer treatment.

The Wellcome acquisition has been decided in nicely and the debts taken on to finance the £9bn deal last year are coming down at a good lick.

No surprise then that the shares jumped to an immediate premium on the announcement yesterday of better-than-expected first-half figures. Adjusting for the fact that Wellcome only came into the group half-way through the comparable period, which means the reported figures in our table are somewhat misleading, sales pushed ahead by 6 per cent and trading profit rose by 34 per cent. There was a highly encouraging rise in trading margin from 31 per cent to 39 per cent.

No surprise, either, however, that on reflection the market pushed the price all the way back down again as it focused on the long-term outlook for Glaxo. The company is in good shape, but what good news there is is in the price and plenty of worries persist.

First and foremost of these is what will happen to Zantac sales once the all-important US patent expires next July. The 16 per cent decline thanks to competition in Germany does not augur well for a treatment that still accounts for almost a quarter of Glaxo's sales, even after the introduction of Wellcome products and after the undoubted success of the company's new product portfolio.

Glaxo reckons the £164m loss in sales from Zantac was more than twice made up by increased sales of "new products" those introduced since 1990, which added £327m during the half, a 51 per cent rise. Excluding Zantac, sales growth was 14 per cent at constant exchange rates.

Glaxo undoubtedly has strong positions in a range of important markets, including respiratory disease, which accounts for 22 per cent of total sales, migraine, where Imigran has become Glaxo's third-largest product, and Aids, where recent successful trial results suggest the company has a tight grip on what could be an enormous moneymaker.

But Zantac is a big milestone around the group's neck, meaning that it will have to run extremely hard just to stand still. Lehman Brothers thinks the long-run growth rate in earnings per share will work out at no more than 8 per cent. Not bad for a £31bn company but hardly the stuff to set investment pulses racing.

On the basis of Lehman's forecast

### THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

profits of £3bn this year, the shares stand on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 15. That is hardly a recipe for outperformance and there is much better value elsewhere in the sector.

### GRE proves it can go it alone

GRE is scathing about suggestions that it needs a partner and on yesterday's half-year performance it gained some credibility. At least, unlike one of its recently merged peers, the company does not put out press releases in which the quotes are attributed jointly to the executive deputy chairman and the chief executive.

That quaint formula was in Royal & Sun Alliance's announcement of job cuts and management changes, and was ostensibly to reassure the two lots of staff in the merged companies that all their interests were being looked after.

It is hardly a good omen for a smooth integration of the two groups and GRE is arguably better off on its own.

John Robins, chief executive, is also putting in proper chief executives to run the three main sectors. So though Royal & Sun Alliance has plenty of scope for cost savings, it will be hard work and,

though it was late into direct selling, GRE is investing heavily and has increased the revoval rate by existing customers since it took over RAC Insurance Services.

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Insurance Services.

# The way to save our industries from the museum

In a dark hamlet clinging to the side of the Rossendale valley in the heart of the county stands a monument to the county's once mighty cotton industry. The Helmshore Textile Museum is a working mill. The spinning equipment there, made nearly in 1903, was taken direct from surrounding mills when they closed, direct from manufacturing to museum.

It would be hard to find a more suitable symbol of the penalties British industry has paid for its lack of investment over the years. By 1816, capital investment in the cotton industry in Manchester and its environs is thought to have reached £20m, equivalent to £1.20 today.

Waves of new technology triggered additional expenditure but by the 1930s the basic techniques in use had stopped changing. When the mills closed in the 1970s much of the machinery in use was about a century old.

Yet further technological upgrades might have saved the industry from destruction by cheap foreign competition. Two decades ago it was still labour-intensive business - pretty much commodity items - assisted by government grants for certain types of equipment in the 1940s.

Although wages were low compared with the rest of manufacturing, the industry could not compete with low-cost competitors in southern Europe and the Far East. Investment in new technology might have allowed the industry to survive and grow, even though the traditional jobs would still have disappeared.

There are other British industries that have survived only because foreign owners have made the necessary investments. The car industry is one, consumer electronics another.



ECONOMIC VIEW  
DIANE COYLE

Japanese and Korean companies have seen investment opportunities where British owners have not.

It is hardly surprising then that the Labour Party has identified investment - in human as well as physical capital - as the key issue for the country's long-term growth prospects. On the face of it, the figures are pretty damning and it is natural to suppose they have something to do with the weaknesses of Britain's economic performance. As the table shows, average UK investment growth, whether total investment or business investment, has lagged behind the average in other industrial countries.

Labour's emphasis on the importance of investment has been criticised by the chief economist at City investment bank UBS, Bill Martin. Mr Martin argues that the idea that higher investment can permanently raise the rate of growth, ignores the fact of diminishing returns to capital. Empirical research tends to support the conventional economic assumption that the rate of return on investment will fall the more there is. In these circumstances, higher investment will boost output

growth only temporarily - very welcome, especially as what is temporary to an economist, can be many years in real life, but not a panacea for the nation's economic ills.

The clash between this dismal conclusion from conventional economists and New Labour's common-sense instinct that investment matters, can be resolved by acknowledging that it is not just extra investment, but the efficiency with which it is used that explains economic performance.

In industry, more efficient ways of using capital and labour are likely to be embodied in new equipment. It is much easier for managers to alter working practices by introducing a new machine than to march to the shop floor and tell everyone to start doing everything differently.

Economist Nick Crafts has concluded that the UK's relatively poor economic performance in the 1960s and 1970s was due to inefficiency. In a recent study he wrote: "The earlier failures had their roots in British institutions, and the Thatcherites were given an unusual political window of opportunity to attack them." He has concluded, though, that

there are still big question marks hanging over the efficiency and technological capability of British industry, despite the Thatcherite attack on unions and workplace inflexibility. This is a conclusion that also has a clear appeal for Labour, although it would focus on a different set of institutional failings.

Labour has turned the spotlight on the inefficiencies of the UK's capital markets in financing industry - and rightly. Many business people will privately agree that their institutional shareholders take a short-term view, and that they would prefer to pay out less in dividends, although most also think it is unimportant so long as they retain enough profits to finance those investment projects they think are needed.

Policitians across the spectrum also agree on the failure of the education system to deliver a good education to the majority of children. Most Britons start their working lives with low basic skills, a high level of boredom and little motivation - and it is downhill from there. As Sir John Harvey-Jones has observed, they have energy and creativity but these qualities are spent on building a matchstick model of the Taj Mahal or dreaming that the pop group they have formed will be the next Oasis.

It is, of course, even harder to improve efficiency than it is to increase the level of investment. It is Japanese inward investment that brought new practices such as just-in-time and team-working to great swathes of British industry. Investment in new techniques is likely to be the only alternative for UK companies.

For the cotton industry, which survives mainly in specialised and high-quality niches, it is too late. It might be too late for other chunks of

manufacturing, too. Ten miles down the valley from the Helmshore museum lies Chadwicks, Britain's last producer of plastic drinking straws, among other things.

The plant has the most up-to-the-minute machinery there is for making straws, having made much of the workforce redundant during the past decade and a half. The business is still struggling against Chinese competition, which is far less technically advanced, very labour intensive and very low cost. Perhaps the lesson is that an advanced industrial country should not cling to the low-tech end of manufacturing at all. There is nothing technically sophisticated about small plastic tubes, no matter how impressive the machines that make them.

For the rest of manufacturing, however, survival will depend on investing in new technology and finding new ways of working with it. It is the countries that have been at the forefront of using computer technology in manufacturing - the US and Japan - which have the best economy-wide employment performance in the industrialised world. It is becoming painfully clear to other countries that it is better to invest in new technology yourself than to import the fruits of it from overseas.

Industrialisation, as much as their workforce, dislike the fact that technical progress puts people out of work. But the choice is out between carrying on as before and investing in new equipment that will put many people out of a job; it is a choice between the disappearance of all the jobs and the loss of some. After all, the textiles industry was once Britain's biggest employer and one of the most technically advanced industries anywhere in the world, as the museums poignantly remind us.



Twilight zone: A cotton worker in Wigan in the 1950s. New technology might have rescued the industry. Photograph: Hulton Getty

		Gross investment as % of GDP	
	Total	Business	UK: 19 countries
1961-73	18.7	21.3	8.5
1980-1995	17.6	20.8	12.8
Annual averages			

Source: BIS

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	D-Mark
US	1.5751	5.3	6.3
Canada	2.4040	1.13	5.57
Germany	2.2393	48.61	140.10
France	7.7878	132.13	365.334
Italy	2.3682	48.63	142.16
Japan	1.6313	75.70	225.13
ECU	1.2844	15.11	45.40
Belgium	47.297	32.25	30.375
Netherlands	2.5738	59.18	146.235
Ireland	0.9673	5.57	19.74
Norway	0.9761	12.60	31.02
Spain	1.6572	21.31	69.45
Australia	0.1286	0.4	1.9
Austria	2.0447	47.61	120.37
Hong Kong	1.0424	10.11	28.70
Malta	3.0658	0.10	0.4
New Zealand	2.2582	43.67	139.55
Saudi Arabia	5.8389	0.10	0.4
Singapore	2.2004	0.10	0.4

Other Spot Rates

Forward rates: marked to low and up at discount;

rate quoted low to high at a premium;

Dollar rates: London foreign exchange rates; call rate 0.00123 3033;

sub-add to spot rate;

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Dollar rates: London foreign exchange rates; call rate 0.00123 3033;

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Dollar rates: London foreign exchange rates; call rate 0.00123 3033;

sub-add to spot rate;






**GRAND PRIX '96 RACE SCHEDULE**

**Hungarian GP**  
August 11  
**Belgian GP**  
August 25  
**Italian GP**  
September 8  
**Portuguese GP**  
September 22  
**Japanese GP**  
October 13

**Team Position Check Line:**  
0891 391 806

**Results & Top 50 Teams:**  
0891 391 807

Calls cost 39p per minute, 49p per minute for all other times. Rules are as previously published and are available on request.



Damon Hill winning pole position in the German Grand Prix

Photograph: EMPICS

## The latest scores and results

**A**t last – a real race. After the high speed procession that was Silverstone, last Sunday's German Grand Prix at Hockenheim was the ideal antidote, a slipstreaming thriller that was a throwback to the days before wings and chicanes strangled racing. There is no doubt at all who the hero of the day was – see the Driver of the Day box for a full eulogy – but we should also show our appreciation to Damon Hill for making such a Horlicks of his start and giving himself so much work to do later in the race. Hill is making something of a speciality of bogging down when the lights go out and needs to do some work to sort the problem out. There is absolutely no point in producing a heroic "Banzai" lap in Saturday qualifying – as Hill did at Hockenheim – if you are then

going to sit on the grid and wave half the field past before you set off in pursuit. For all of which whingeing, Hill once again came up with a bucketload of points for his Dream Team managers. The only category he failed to score in was "most improved", but then while he is taking all the pole positions he is always going to have a tough time improving on first place. Aside from the regular top scorers, Heinz-Harald Frentzen put in a useful run to finish with ten points, including five for the fastest pit-stop. As the F1 silly season gets underway, as Frentzen is being talked about as a replacement for Hill at Williams next season. But the German has had a lousy year with Sauber, fighting a lack of power from their Ford engine and occasionally being shown up by

his British team-mate Johnny Herbert. He will have been determined to do well in front of his home crowd last weekend, and with a little more luck might have made it into the points proper.

Ricardo Rosset put in a steady run to gather eight points for Arrows, but any Dream Team manager with Arrows chassis will have been very displeased with his team-mate Jos Verstappen, who dumped it in

the dirt early for a minus score. Verstappen's reputation as a "coming man" has been tarnished by some distinctly dodgy driving over the last few races; he needs to clean up his act.

### DRIVER OF THE DAY: GERHARD BERGER

What a performance – and what desperately bad luck. Gerhard Berger drove one of the races of his long career on Sunday, and was within a few miles of a famous victory when his Renault engine let go without warning. So he was left with no reward at all for starting in the race and serving notice to Damon Hill that his long period of dominance may be at an end.

Berger has taken his time to settle in at Benetton following his long stint with Ferrari, but all the signs are now that the lanky Austrian has got the car working the way he wants it. He used all the – legitimate – tricks in

a little luck his day will come again.

## WIN a drive in a grand prix car

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize – a drive in a 650bhp F1 car.

You will be flown to the AGS team's training school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for a day driving F1 and other single seat cars.

**INDIVIDUAL GRAND PRIX PRIZES STILL TO BE WON**  
You can enter our Formula 1 Dream Team game at any time during the grand prix season. Even if you don't win our top prize, don't worry, there are still prizes to be won with each grand prix race. Enter for the Hungarian Grand Prix and you could win exclusive membership to Team McLaren, which offers a host of unique benefits and privileges. Get The Independent on Wednesday 7 or Thursday 8 August for details on how to register.

**GERMAN GRAND PRIX PRIZE WINNER**  
Congratulations to Diane Sullivan from London and her team Du or Die. She has won a trip for two to the Belgian Grand Prix.



### Overall Top 50 Dream Teams

1	Dan's Rockhoppers	1	A K Racing Team A
2	Sinckley Formula 1	2	Speed Buggy
3	Peanjorce	3	Drive Blind
4	The Dare Devils	4	Used Rubber
5	Dream Machines	5	The 7 Percenters
6	Harvey	6	Follow Me Please Racing
7	God's Son	7	Drack
8	Bisland's Bangers	8	Hill's Decline
9	I'm Alright Jacques	9	Stagnant 3
10	Bino One	10	Smith Sizzlers
11	They Who Dare	11	Emily Zoom
12	Charlie's Choice	12	Track Suit Racing UK
13	DSC	13	Eagle Racing
14	Petrol Heads	14	Skidids
15	Ward's Wonders	15	Team Shambles
16	Bourbon	16	Overdrive
17	Red Rose Racing	17	Diesel Dreamers
18	Formula Fantastic	18	Vernunft Racing
19	Herb's Flyers	19	Jack Burchell Ford
20	Players One		

### Grand Prix Shopping List

#### POINTS SCORED

DRIVERS	1	2	3
1 M Schumacher	14	131	
2 J Alesi	22	140	
3 D Hill	34	258	
4 G Berger	7	94	
5 D Coulthard	19	118	
6 E Irvine	0	42	
7 J Villeneuve	17	210	
8 J.3	2	125	
9 H H Frentzen	10	61	
10 M Brundle	0	52	
11 R Barrichello	14	82	
12 J Herbert	-1	50	
13 M	0	0	
14 M Saio	6	63	
15 P Laty	6	31	
16 M	0	0	
17 P. Diziz	-2	55	
18 U Katayama	-3	1	
19 J Verstappen	5	4	
20 O Paris	5	81	
21 L Badoer	0	5	
22 R Rosset	0	19	
23 A Montemini	0	7	
24 G Fisichella	0	0	
25 V Sospini	0	0	
26 T Marques	0	0	
27 F Lagorce	0	0	
28 H Noda	0	0	
29 T Inoue	0	0	
30 M Blondell	0	0	
31 J Coulthard	0	0	
32 K Brack	0	0	
33 K Burt	0	0	
34 E Collard	0	0	
35 N Fontana	0	0	
36 D Franchitti	0	0	
37 N Larini	0	0	
38 J Magnussen	0	0	
39 A Prost	0	0	
40 G Tarquini	0	0	
41 K Wendlinger	0	0	

CHASSIS	1	2	3
1 £20m	16	140	
2 40 Benetton	20	192	
3 41 Williams	20	192	
4 £18m	9	131	
5 42 Ferrari	14	99	
6 £14m	9	131	
7 43 McLaren	9	131	
8 £14m	9	131	
9 44 Sauber	-1	54	
10 45 Jordan	12	79	
11 £10m	9	80	
12 46 Ligier	9	80	
13 £6m	-3	41	
14 47 Tyrrell	5	21	
15 £5m	-5	21	
16 48 Arrows	0	13	
17 £5m	0	13	
18 49 Minardi	0	0	
19 £1m	0	0	
20 50 Forti	0	0	

ENGINES	1	2	3
1 £22m	20	196	
2 51 Renault	20	196	
3 £18m	16	126	
4 52 Ferrari	16	126	
5 £15m	14	157	
6 53 Mercedes	14	157	
7 £12m	13	97	
8 54 Peugeot	13	97	
9 £10m	12	117	
10 55 Mugen	12	117	
11 £8m	11	93	
12 56 Ford V10	11	93	
13 £6m	0	64	
14 57 Yamaha	0	24	
15 £4m	0	24	
16 58 Hart	0	0	
17 £3m	0	0	
18 59 Ford Zetec V8	0	0	
19 £2m	0	34	
20 60 Ford ED-V8	0	34	

Join over 29,000 readers who are playing Formula 1 Dream Team

Up to 150



# Rhythms out of sync with Olympic spirit

Ribbons and pretty lights cannot mask the absurdity of some of the latest sports to win medal status, laments Ken Jones

**T**he quote from David Wallechinsky's *History of the Olympic Games*, the idea behind the modern pentathlon is that a soldier is ordered to deliver a message. He starts out on an unfamiliar horse, but is forced to dismount and fight a duel with swords. He escapes, but is trapped and has to shoot his way out with a pistol. Then he swims across a river, and finally finishes his assignment by running 4,000 metres through woods.

If conceived as an officer-class event, nothing probably was seen to better represent the Olympic ideal put forth 100 years ago by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Games.

That the pentathlon is now threatened with extinction, one of the sports coming under close scrutiny by the International Olympic Committee, signifies an attitude born of rampant commercial exploitation and the escalating demands of television.

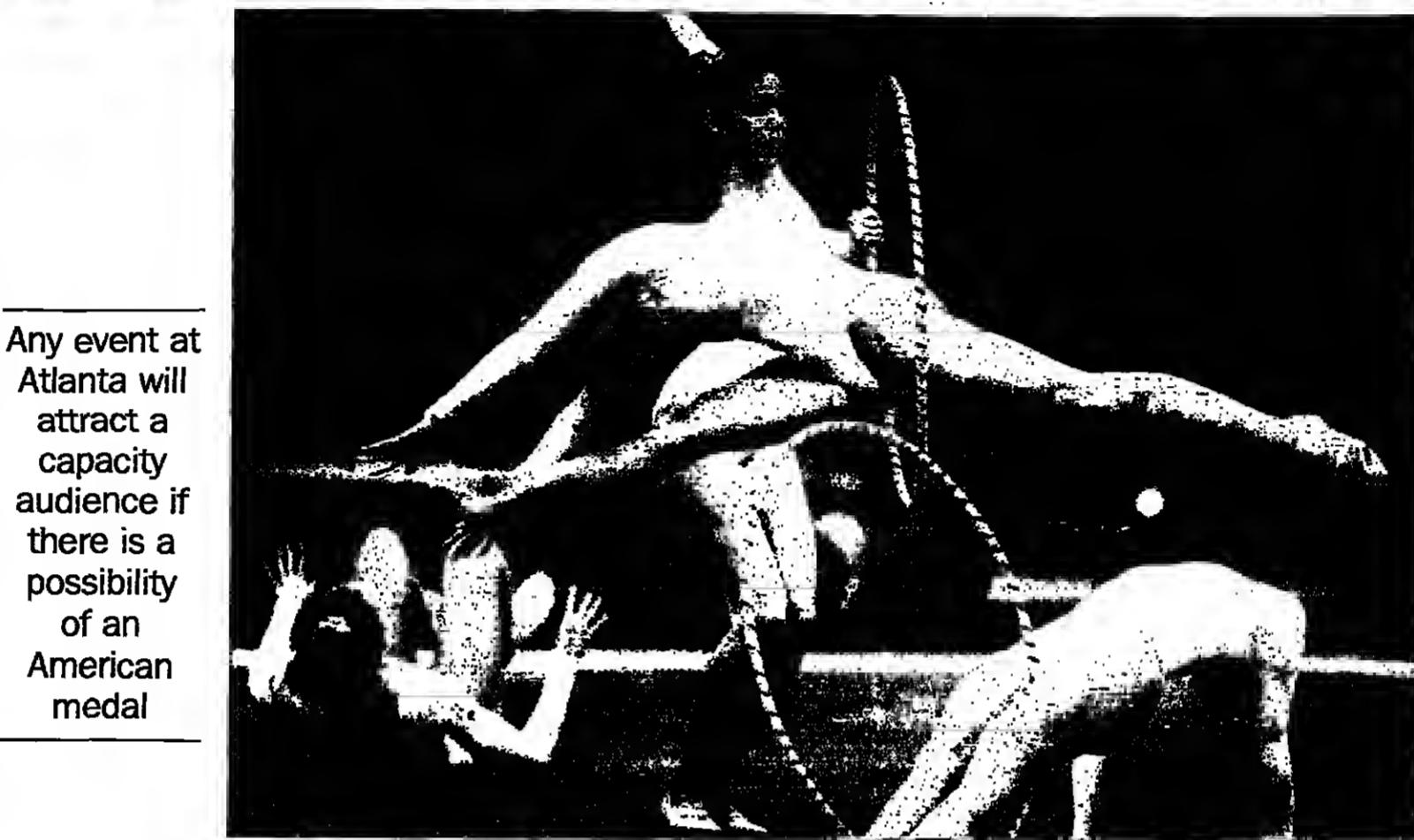
For the pentathlon, boxing and related events that echo trials of combat on which the ancient Games were founded, Atlanta 1996 is a year of Olympic foreboding.

Part of the IOC's policy seems to be that if you can't slap a logo on it get rid of it. Instead the ludicrous beauty-shop trivias of synchronised swimming and rhythmic gymnastics: the absurdity of beach volleyball.

Can you imagine this? During training at Emory University this week, rhythmic gymnasts expressed concern that cool blasts of air would mess up their ribbons. Lights sighted on the arena's dark ceiling were also considered to be a problem. "The equipment gets lost in those lights," the Russian ribbon champion, Anna Zaripova, said. "I have a black ball and black clubs, so I may need to put white tape or something on them."

Poor girls. Such problems.

"I just hope they get the air conditioning right," the US national champion, Jessica Davis, said, recalling that her ribbon got so tangled during an event here last May that several seconds were lost while she unknotted it.



Sport or spectacle? The Russian synchronised swimming team (above) make patterns in the water while the rhythmic gymnasts of the American team jump through hoops in order to impress the judges

Photographs: Empics (top) and AFP

Any event at Atlanta will attract a capacity audience if there is a possibility of an American medal

Apparently, coping with such difficulties separates the best from the rest.

"I haven't done anything special to prepare for the air conditioning," Elena Vitrichenko, the Ukraine's 1996 world ribbon champion, said. "At this level,

member from Esther Williams' movies. Japan were a daze of lime green suits, cartwheeling and karate-kicking their way into the pool to Ninja music.

For Canada it was crosses on the chest and Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," while the Americans

modestly took the plunge to strains of the "Hallelujah Chorus".

Some admiration can be held out for the lung power of these pulchritudinous performers, but what synchronised swimming means in traditional Olympic

terms is beyond this reporter. As there was a large and enthusiastic crowd the obvious conclusion is that any event at Atlanta will attract a capacity audience if there is the possibility of an American medal.

The debate over what constitutes a sport is endless. The ancient games began with foot races, to which events of a combative nature – boxing, wrestling and the hurling of missiles – were later added. Foot races and field events remain the pinnacle of Olympic

The Olympics have ballooned to absurd limits, made unwieldy by events that normally struggle to draw flies

achievement but are now surrounded by froth, and to this observer, there is something quite ridiculous about the lip-smacking enthusiasm with which the IOC addresses further intrusions on the Olympic ethos.

Maybe it is simply a case of administrators endeavouring to swim with the recreational tide, but the job is done with the gusto of corporate entrepreneurs seizing on chances to make deals.

Unquestionably, to my mind, the Olympics have ballooned to absurd limits, made unwieldy by events that normally struggle to draw flies.

However, it is not just the tripper to which the IOC should be paying attention. For example, professionalism has made a nonsense of the basketball tournament, now a walkover for American multi-millionaires, the "Dream Team", a grotesque insult to the concept of democratic competition.

The IOC would happily drop boxing for the reasons that it cannot be marketed and is a turn-off for the distaff television audience. Shortly after bidding successfully for these Games, the Atlanta organising committee approached Augusta National, home of the Masters, with a view to staging an Olympic golf tournament. It almost reached fruition, but no more of a case can be held out for golf here than can be made for tennis and football.

You can go on and like this standing up one Olympic event, knocking down another, vulnerable to disparate conclusions.

What cannot be avoided is that the Olympics are now held in the grip of intense corporate activity. Earlier this week a member of the US softball team was reprimanded for appearing in a training suit provided by a rival kit sponsor. The influence of the main sports shoe manufacturers, Nike and Reebok, is overwhelming.

A golf tournament would have been swooped on by the makers of golf equipment and clothing. A similar philosophy applied to the introduction of tennis at the 1988 Seoul Games, and baseball in Barcelona four years ago.

What next? There is talk that ballroom dancing and snooker will play a part, if first as exhibition sports, at the next Olympics in Sydney. "Why not?" asked a man of romantic mind this week. Daft as it may sound, there are even people out there pressing a case for bodybuilding.

## Sciandri leads the break to win bronze

Max Sciandri brought British cycling to the brink of Olympic glory yesterday. The Derby-born rider, who was brought up in Italy, and used his British birthright to earn a Games place, gave his new team their first road race bronze for 40 years.

Not since Alan Jackson's third in Melbourne had British road racing been in the Olympic medals and Sciandri was the man who put the match to the short fuse of a highly charged race which for the first time included the mainstream professionals from Europe.

The gold fell to Switzerland's Pascal Richard who left

**Olympic**  
Cycling  
By Robin Nicholls

his sprint until the last 50 metres to edge out Rolf Sorensen of Denmark, with Sciandri third two seconds behind.

At the 22-kilometre race around the upturn suburb of Buckhead reached its climax Sciandri, not for the first time, responded to an attack by American Lance Armstrong.

The Texan's desperate last

bid to win a cycling gold for the

United States failed as Sciandri, Sorensen and Richard raced clear.

The three had been team-mates in the past but as Richard said after receiving his medal: "This is the Olympics and it is every man for himself. They may have been my team-mates and we knew each other's strengths but today it was down to the individual."

The race around 17 laps of the well-heeled suburb past neat lawns and flowerbeds of mansions owned by millionaires was always lively.

It was not, however, until the last eight laps that the tempo

rose to produce a group of 12 leaders from whom the decisive move came.

Sciandri who has suffered all season from injuries and illness said: "It was a very confused race and I did not know what was happening. I was lucky to be in that move."

"Maybe I went a little too early, but if I had not done that, I wouldn't have had a chance of winning the gold."

He was, however, the driving force that finally broke up a very influential group and he rode the race of his life to vindicate any criticism of his selection.

## Slocombe's squad ready for revenge

**Olympic**  
Women's Hockey

By Gillian Newsum

"They have several players

we'll have to watch very carefully, but in the end I think it will come down to fitness and mental toughness."

"There isn't a lot to choose between both sides in terms of skill and technique, and I think they've both shown that they're coping well with the pressures of playing in the Olympic Games."

"It's also essential to get shots on target because a lot of goalkeepers have proved to be vulnerable here."

"It doesn't help that they have so much kit in the heat and humidity, and I believe

that has affected their judgement."

Britain's goalkeeper, Hilary Rose, of Sutton Coldfield, is expected to have returned to full fitness after injuring a rib in Tuesday's convincing 5-0 win against Argentina, and the stunning return to form of striker Jane Sissmith, who scored a hat-trick in the game, has given the squad added confidence.

"We've had some ups and downs and it feels like we've been here an eternity," said the captain, Jill Atkins, one of eight players who were bronze medalists at the Barcelona Games. "We've had a good

rest and will be back fighting for the honours."

Slocombe, a university lecturer from Bristol, added that she had not yet made a decision about her future. "I've been involved in the game as an international player and coach for 26 years, and reaching the medal stages here has been the highlight of my career," she said.

"I shall consider the future when I return from holiday. There have been many, many lows and too few highs. But whatever the outcome of tomorrow's match, I shall cherish the memories."

## Dutch set for dressage gold

**Olympic**  
Equestrianism

By Gillian Newsum

single medal winner.

Van Grunsven will start as the clear favourite for the individual gold in Saturday's freestyle competition for which she has had a new music score specially composed.

Richard Davison, who is Britain's sole representative in the Grand Prix special, failed to qualify for the freestyle on the nine-year-old Astari.

But this was only the second international Grand Prix special of Astari's career and Davison was quite pleased with the youngster. "He was feeling tired but he still tried hard," said Davison.

For the first time in Olympic dressage the scores from both these tests and from the Grand Prix will be combined to give a

medals is Nick Skelton (Show Jumping), Michael Whitaker (Two Step), Geoff Billington (It's Otto), and John Whitaker (Welham).

Blood tests carried out on

Two Step after his poor performance on Monday indicates that he has suffered a slight virus. And Whitaker thinks the horse's back has also been troubling him. "We're keeping our fingers crossed," he said yesterday.

Nathias Beaumann, the Germany event rider, has sent a fax and has also submitted two photographs to the international federation, the FEI, in order to substantiate his allegations that the Argentinian show-jumping team have used illegal training methods at their pre-Olympic site at Pine Top Farm.

The SEI appeal committee is taking this seriously. It has called an urgent meeting to discuss the matter.

"It would be no different for

## SCARLET FACES IN ATLANTA

Yesterday's Olympic bloomers

The latest twist in the continuing saga of the Olympic buses is that the drivers have now gone on strike. They see that replacement buses which have been conscripted from a fleet of school vehicles are just too dangerous to drive.

Tires are split, fire extinguishers are out of date, steering wheels fall off and doors don't close, which is a bit worrying considering the children take thousands of children to and from school every day during term time.

The drivers rebelled after being told to drive the buses which have no radios or air conditioners – to the Georgia International Horse Park in Conyers, which is one of the longest routes in the system.

"It would be no different for

us to take one of these buses and kill some people than to put that bomb in Olympic Park," said Katie Brady, a California school bus driver hired to work during the Olympics.

It now seems only a matter of time before the authorities are forced to dust down a stagecoach or two to transport people about, as the current fleet of buses are piling up on the hard shoulders of the free ways.

The most common sight in and around Atlanta now is not a bus driver standing by his vehicle with his bonnet up at the side of the road as he scratches his head, knowing neither where he is or what is wrong with his bus.

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